

BRITISH NAVAL STRATEGY IN THE FAR EAST,

1919 - 1942 : A STUDY OF PRIORITIES IN

THE QUESTION OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE

---

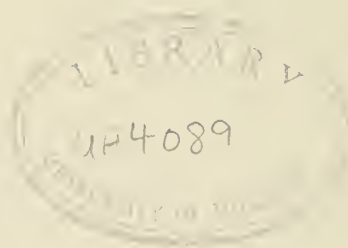
PETER GUY SILVERMAN

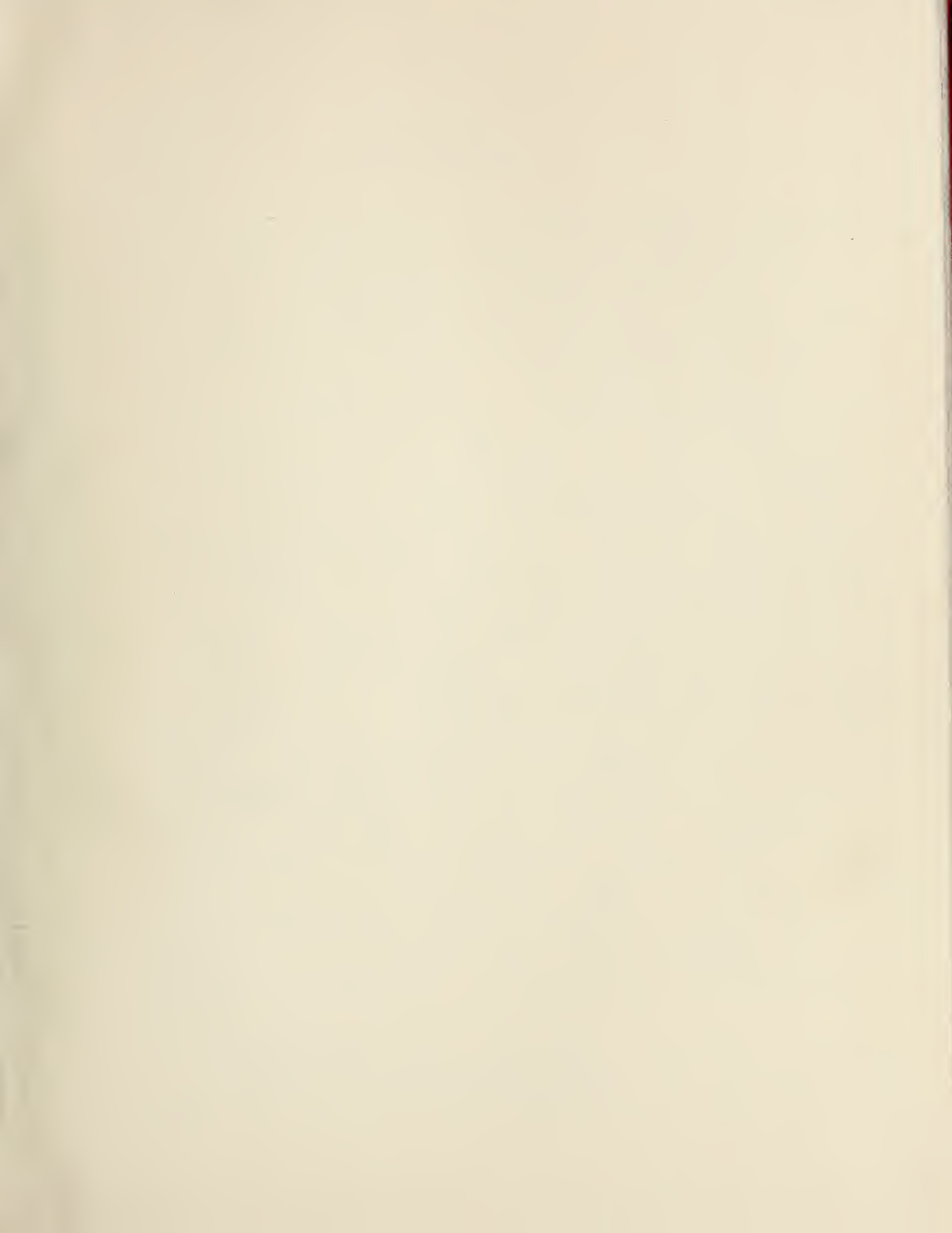
VOL. II.


1976

LITM Acc no. T1979-0066 (08)

University of Toronto Libraries  
120 St. George St.  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 1A5







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/britishnavalstra02silv>



CHAPTER VIII

STRATEGY 1939-1940

At the outbreak of war in Europe, the Pacific Dominions immediately came into the conflict on the side of Britain. Not long thereafter, they contemplated the dispatch of land forces to the Middle East. But before they took such a step, they wanted to be assured by the United Kingdom that they would not be exposing themselves to danger by sending the best part of their armed forces overseas. In light of these apprehensions, the C.O.S. drew up a review of the Far Eastern situation for the Dominion representatives, who were due to arrive in London in November. This noted that Japan, while fully occupied in China, would not hesitate to take advantage of any situation in Europe which she could exploit to her own advantage. The slow pace of British naval construction, coupled with naval dispositions required to deal with convoy raiders and with the losses that would certainly be sustained, made it difficult to concentrate a fleet quickly for service in the Far East should Japan attack Singapore. This situation had been foreseen; the forces at the base would be reinforced to enable it to hold out. The C.O.S. concluded by repeating the basic assumption concerning Far Eastern strategy: that as long as Singapore held out, the Japanese, always fearful of the arrival of the British Fleet, would not launch any large-scale operation against the Pacific Dominions. Therefore, "we feel that the immediate danger to Australia and New Zealand is remote".<sup>1</sup>

Lord Lothian,<sup>2</sup> British Ambassador in Washington, supported this view. Writing to Halifax, he said that "long before



Japanese action threatened Australia or New Zealand, America would be at war". The Ambassador based his opinion on the anti-Japanese feeling prevalent in the United States on the threat of Japan to the Monroe Doctrine, and on the American view of the Central Pacific as a preserve of the United States.

The optimistic appreciation by the C.O.S. and the confidence in American intervention expressed by Lothian led Winston Churchill, now First Lord of the Admiralty, to draft a memorandum on November 17, 1939, giving specific assurances to the Pacific Dominions.<sup>3</sup> Churchill took as his basic hypothesis the C.O.S. appreciation that the Japanese would not launch a major attack on the Dominions as long as they feared the arrival of the British fleet at Singapore. He also alluded to Lothian's dispatch, and claimed that any such Japanese move would be resented by the United States, the implication being that the Americans would enter the war against Japan. Churchill, who had been kept privy to many of the heated debates over the priorities to be accorded to the Mediterranean and the Far East, stated that should Singapore or the Pacific Dominions be threatened, the British would sacrifice the Mediterranean to send a fleet to the Far East.

This was a far-ranging commitment. When the Churchill memorandum reached the War Cabinet's Secretary, Ismay, he immediately drew up his own critique.<sup>4</sup>

Churchill, he said, had gone further than Chamberlain's cable to the Dominions of March 20. The whole issue of moving the fleet to the Far East had been "hotly debated" in London; but the bleak choice that Churchill had presented had "never specifically (been) put before them (the Dominions) until now. But the memorandum had already been given to the Australian High Commissioner and could not be recalled. Ismay hoped however that the Dominions "did not read into it more





than it was intended to convey". Ismay did not state what he himself read into it.

Did Churchill's memorandum, in fact, go further than previous assurances given to the Dominions? The British Government had to remember that they had recently concluded military conversations with Turkey, and that in these, and in the staff talks with the French, they had assured both these powers that they would make every effort to keep the Mediterranean open for sea-traffic and neutralize Italian naval power. This made it difficult to state when a fleet would be sent to the Far East and what size it would be. Churchill's memorandum referred to a serious attack by Japan. In such a case, a fleet would certainly have to be sent.

The Cabinet however approved the First Lord's memorandum,<sup>5</sup> with the understanding that it was taken in conjunction with Chamberlain's telegram of June, 1939, and with the C.I.D. Paper of June 4, 1937. The Cabinet wished to make it clear that the telegram still held good, but that what action would be taken would depend on the circumstances, and would be decided by the Government at the time.

On November 20,<sup>6</sup> the Dominion representatives met with the British in London. Churchill and his colleagues now had to explain just what was implied in his memorandum. As Ismay suggested, the British hedged: Churchill informed the meeting that his memorandum had to be taken in conjunction with other documents on the subject. But he did stress that should the Pacific Dominions be seriously threatened, the fleet would be sent East.

But the open questions were: what size of fleet and when would it arrive? The Australian Minister of Supply and Development, Robert Casey, after hearing Churchill's explanation,



stated that if Australia was to participate fully in the war, his Government would "require a most comprehensive undertaking regarding the security of Singapore". Churchill then promised that "we should never allow Singapore to fall, nor permit a serious attack on either Australia or New Zealand". If Italy entered the conflict, British strategy would be to knock her out of the war, freeing the Navy to move east. If this could not be done, the Mediterranean would be left in French hands, and the Mediterranean fleet would move to the Far East.

The next day, Cadogan, Churchill, Chatfield and Eden (now Dominions Secretary) met with Australian and New Zealand representatives. They drafted a revised memorandum,<sup>7</sup> which was approved by the Cabinet on the 23rd.<sup>8</sup> It read as follows:

However, should Japanese encroachment begin, or should Great Britain pass into a state of war with Japan, the Admiralty would make such preparatory dispositions as would enable them to offer timely resistance either to the serious attack upon Singapore or to the invasion of Australia and New Zealand. These dispositions would not necessarily take the form of stationing a fleet at Singapore, but would be of a character to enable the necessary concentrations to be made to the eastward in ample time to prevent a disaster.

What did ample time mean? It will be recalled that as late as 1919, the Admiralty, perceiving the possible ending of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, raised the question of the establishment of a major naval base in the Far East. In the memorandum which was then submitted to the C.I.D., the Admiralty noted that at least three months would be required to re-establish British naval superiority in the Far East in the event of an Anglo-Japanese conflict.<sup>9</sup>

This, as Roskill notes,<sup>10</sup> appears to have been the origin of the "ninety Days to Singapore Thesis", which was to re-emerge





on many occasions. In 1921, the Naval Staff had produced a comprehensive study of the logistics of the dispatch of a fleet to the Far East, on the basis that war with Japan would break out in 1930.<sup>11</sup> Assuming the best conditions; the fleet fully fueled; fuel-storage tanks built and stocked along the route; three days notice given before the declaration of war; and good weather, the fleet could reach Singapore in 40 days via the Suez Canal. Soon after the Admiralty accepted this as the basis for future planning.<sup>12</sup>

However, over the period up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the period before relief was slowly extended. By the time war did start, it had become six months.<sup>13</sup>

But it is obvious from the documents that the Pacific Dominions did not know about this change. They assumed only that the period of 70 days, told to Bruce in July 1939, held good. It is more than likely that this figure was overlooked as occasion demanded, and the various British promises that talked of "ample time", "arriving in time to relieve Singapore", "immediately to your aid", etc., were taken by the Dominions to mean that a fleet would be sent immediately to the Far East once war broke out with Japan.

Events were unfolding in Europe however, that would make redundant much of what had been discussed.

In April-June 1940, the Battles of Norway and France got under way. In Norway, the Navy learned the harsh truth about the vulnerability of ships to air attack, and suffered serious losses, including the carrier Glorious. This campaign was to pale into insignificance as the Germans unleashed their Blitzkrieg on France. On May 26, Operation Dynamo was under way, the evacuation of the B.E.F. from France. By June 25, the



British had been thrown out of the continent of Europe.

On May 19, the Chiefs of Staff reported on British strategy in the event of a French collapse. Referring to the Far East, they assumed that Italy was now actively allied with Germany, in which case:

what forces we can send (to the Far East, naval and air, can only be judged in the light of the situation at the time. It is most improbable that we can send any naval forces to the Far East. Therefore we must rely on the United States of America to safeguard our interests in the Far East. Australia should be asked to consider a reinforcement for the garrison at Singapore.<sup>14</sup>

The importance of the United States was certainly not a new feature of British planning. Lord Lothian, Churchill and the Cabinet had all expressed the view that if Japan came into the war, the chances were the Americans would intervene. In fact, Churchill had written that Britain would gain more from American intervention against Japan than Britain would suffer from a Japanese attack.<sup>15</sup>

Now with France about to surrender, only the United States could redress the balance. Churchill lost no time in his attempts to get the Americans to underwrite British interests in the Far East. On May 15, in his first message as Prime Minister, he wrote President Roosevelt:

I am looking to you to keep the Japanese quiet in the Pacific using Singapore any way convenient.<sup>16</sup>

A month later, on June 13, the Dominions received a grim assessment of the naval situation in which they were told:

In the unlikely event of Japan ... taking the opportunity to alter the status quo in the Far East, we should be faced with a naval situation in which, without the assistance of France, we





should not have sufficient forces to meet combined German and Italian Navies in European waters and the Japanese fleet in the Far East. We should therefore have to rely on the United States of America to safeguard our interests there.<sup>17</sup>

This honest appreciation was the result of the Chiefs of Staff's review of May 27, 1940, when England's fortunes were rapidly plunging downward. It pointed out, bluntly, that the United Kingdom could not for the moment send a fleet to the Far East, and that British interests there must now be safeguarded by the United States.<sup>18</sup>

This was a bitter pill for the Dominions to swallow. As the New Zealand Prime Minister cabled to Churchill, after agreeing that the crucial area of war demanded first attention.<sup>19</sup>

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand must observe that the undertaking to dispatch an adequate fleet to Singapore if required, formed the basis of the whole of this Dominion's defence preparations....but that undertaking had now passed. <sup>19</sup>

In the interim, on June 17, 1940, the C.O.S. had recommended, contrary to Pound's advice, not to abandon the Mediterranean to the Italians. Political considerations weighed heavily. As the J.P.S.C. noted, such an abandonment of Britain's position would be regarded in the East as the first stage in the "abandonment of our Imperial Position. Even if we recovered that position as the result of a victory in Europe, the blow to our prestige might not be easily forgotten".<sup>20</sup> Having made the decision, the British Government cabled the Dominions:-

The security of our Imperial interests in the Far East lies ultimately in our ability to control sea-communications in South-West Pacific for which purpose adequate fleet must be based at Singapore.



We appreciate your anxiety in respect to the dispatch of a fleet to Singapore.

Formerly we were prepared to abandon the Eastern Mediterranean and dispatch a fleet to the Far East, relying on the French Fleet in (the) Western Mediterranean to contain (the) Italian Fleet.<sup>21</sup>

Now there was no French Navy to hold the Italians, who were free to join the German Fleet in home waters unless they could be blocked at the western end of the Mediterranean.

"We must therefore retain in European waters sufficient naval forces to match both German and Italian Fleets and we cannot do this and send a fleet to the Far East."

What the British were endeavouring to accomplish was to induce the Australians to send a Division to garrison Malaya.<sup>22</sup> But, as Bruce was quick to point out, Australia had sent one Division to the Middle East in 1939. Now, his Government had been told that the fleet could not be sent to the East and it was now being asked to send another Division abroad to Malaya.

When Bruce raised these points, Ismay assured him that the old policy of sacrificing the Mediterranean if Australia was threatened, still held.<sup>23</sup> At the moment, due to the collapse of France, the decisive theatre was in home waters, where British vital communications had to be secured. As long as the fleet was "in being"<sup>24</sup>, Singapore was safe; and as long as the base was fully manned and prepared, the Japanese would hesitate to move south. It was to ensure the latter that Australia was being asked to send troops to Malaya.

Meanwhile, Japan demanded that Britain cease transporting war material to China via the Burma Road and through the port of Hong Kong.<sup>25</sup>





On June 27, Lothian, accompanied by Australia's Casey, called upon the American Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and asked for assistance. They asked that the United States either put pressure on Japan by imposing a full embargo on exports, or by sending ships to Singapore,<sup>26</sup> an idea already proposed by Churchill the previous month. Hull would not agree to either plan, since sending ships to Singapore would denude the American eastern sea-board of naval defence. Nor would the Americans put economic pressure on Japan, as it was an election year and isolationist opinion was still strong.<sup>27</sup> All Hull could give was advice: Britain should stand firm. Yet this was asking the British to take a grave risk, with no commitment from the Americans except Hull's assessment that, as long as the American fleet was at Pearl Harbor, and Britain held out against Germany, Japan would not go to war.<sup>28</sup>

Faced with the options of resistance to Japan and the possibility of having to fight a two-ocean war alone, or of giving in to Japanese demands, the British chose the latter course. On July 18, the Anglo-Japanese Agreement was concluded. This closed the Burma road to war material for three months.<sup>29</sup>

Just at the moment when Anglo-Japanese relations appeared to have stabilized, the Japanese Government fell on July 22, It was replaced by the more aggressive pro-Axis ministry of Prince Konoye. Matsuoka becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs. The new Government adopted the policy of seeking an early settlement of the "China Incident", and the solution of the "Southern Regions Problem". Certain aims were established: the cessation of transport of war material via Indo-China to



Chiang Kai-Shek, and the total closing of the Burma Road. French Indo-China was also to be asked to provide facilities for Japanese armed forces. If these objectives could not be obtained by diplomacy, armed force would be employed.<sup>30</sup>

Both in their private discussions and public announcements, the Japanese made it clear that their neutrality could not be taken for granted. The British, by yielding to Japan's initial demands to close the Burma Road for three months, had gained precious time - time enough to demonstrate to Japan that Hitler was not to have a swift victory in Europe.

Other less dramatic but equally vital battles were being fought. One was the Battle of the Atlantic; the other, the struggle of the shipyards and factories. Both were to have a profound impact on British naval strategy in the Far East.

The grim battle of the Atlantic required small escort ships - lots of them.<sup>31</sup> By March 1940, the demands on the shipyards to build escort vessels had forced the cancellation of the planned long-term programme of naval construction,<sup>32</sup> and with it the abandonment of whatever hope the Admiralty entertained about the building-up of a strong, balanced fleet. The situation was further compounded by the necessity of routing ships bound for the Middle East around the Cape. The doubling of the length of the voyage meant that the number of convoys had to be increased. This involved increase in escorts, as well as an increase in the time that the escorts were away from the main battle of the Atlantic.

As the battle of the convoys went on with unrelenting ferocity, the merchant ships, upon which the survival of Britain depended, were taking heavy losses, losses which had to be made good. This put more strain on the shipyards, not only to build ships, but to repair those which had limped





home. The pressure on the fighting ships further added to the strain on resources. The lengthy refits and overhauls these units demanded, coupled with the need to install the new anti-submarine and anti-aircraft equipment, increased the load on the shipyards again and again. There was just not enough labour, machinery and steel; and so the Navy's ship-building programme had to be continually altered or cut back.<sup>33</sup>

Yet the Admiralty could not remain oblivious to the threat of Japan. In March 1940, Churchill as First Lord, agreed with the naval staff about the long term demands for capital ships.<sup>34</sup> He noted that after the European war, the Far Eastern situation would have to be met. The Navy would need to build two fast capital ships a year to keep ahead of the Japanese. He pointed out that the capital-ship programme had been cut back. Conqueror and Thunderer had been terminated leaving only Vanguard to be built. As well, no fleet aircraft carriers or cruisers were to be laid down in 1940. At a Cabinet meeting on May 12, 1940, it was pointed out that at the end of the European war, the danger in the Far East would demand a force of modern ships mounting 16" guns. The ships however were never built due to the demands of the anti-submarine campaign.

In May, 1940, the C.O.S.<sup>36</sup> strongly recommended that the long-term programme should be resumed as soon as possible. In October, the First Lord A. V. Alexander asked that the long-term programs be instituted as men and material became available; and that the aircraft carrier Indefatigable be restarted, along with eight cruisers suspended in March. He also wanted four new cruisers to be laid down in 1941, plus additional destroyers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood, pointed out "that if these capital ships were being



built to meet the contingency of a war with Japan in 1943 or 1944, we could fairly assume that the United States Navy would be on our side." The Prime Minister, Churchill,<sup>38</sup> felt that the First Lord had made a good case to proceed with the suspended ships. "At the end of the war", Churchill told the Cabinet, "we should be faced with the formidable task of clearing up the situation in the Far East". He continued: "we should be unequal to that task if we fell behind Japan in capital-ship construction." Each ship took four years to build. It was obviously essential to start construction, as "the potentialities of capital ships for altering a military situation were very great indeed". Churchill and the Cabinet agreed that the ships should be built, providing that material and labour were available. But they never became available.

The other nagging problem was, how to accommodate the Pacific Dominions. Increasingly unhappy about the capability of Britain to defend her interests in the Far East, neither Australian or New Zealand were satisfied with the amount of consultation that was taking place between London, Wellington and Canberra concerning Grand Strategy.<sup>40</sup> Before they would acquiesce in any plan to send troops to Singapore they wanted a full comprehensive report covering all aspects of British strategic policy in the Far East. The report drawn up by the J.P.S.C. was the first full-scale appreciation presented to the Dominions since the Imperial Conference of 1937.<sup>41</sup>

The report stressed that Japan's ultimate aim was to rid the Far East of western influence. Thus her strategic objective was to capture Singapore. But she was unlikely to risk a major breach with the British Empire as long as the European situation had not crystallised. The joint planners therefore felt that the British Dominions must play for time,





and avoid a clash with Japan. They desired a general settlement with Japan as soon as possible, but realized such an agreement was not practicable, particularly as it would run counter to American policy towards Japan.

The real problem facing the British was they had no fleet to send to the Far East. They accepted that the ultimate defence of British interests in that part of the globe rested on naval power, but until Germany and Italy had been defeated or their naval strength severely reduced, there were no ships to spare for the Pacific. In these circumstances, the strategy that commended itself was to limit what damage Japan could do to British interests in Asia, and to retain a foothold from which the situation could be retrieved when adequate naval forces became available. As to the defence of the Pacific Dominions, the planners had nothing new to add to their already-stated strategic assumptions - that as long as the Royal Navy had not been defeated and Singapore held out, the chances of a major Japanese assault on the Dominions was unlikely.

The J.P.S.C. also noted that the one non-British area which was of vital strategic importance was the Netherlands East Indies. Should the Japanese succeed in establishing themselves in these islands, the whole system of British defence in the Far East would be compromised and Singapore endangered. Hence, the security of the Netherlands East Indies was second only in importance to the integrity of Australia and Malaya.

The C.O.S.<sup>42</sup> added their comments to all this. They pointed out that even if the decision was made to send the Mediterranean Fleet to the Far East, it would be incapable of successfully challenging the Japanese Fleet, unless it arrived at Singapore before hostilities broke out. They suggested another strategy, that the inferior fleet operate not from Singapore, but from Trincomali in Ceylon, to protect the sea-



route through the Indian Ocean.

However, they were not in favour of giving up the Eastern Mediterranean, as that would jeopardize the whole British position there. The real problem was that if the Fleet left the Eastern Mediterranean, and if Force H at Gibraltar moved to home waters, the Italian Fleet would combine with the German Navy, giving the Axis a numerical superiority in the Atlantic. The C.O.S. therefore suggested that Force H be replaced with the older capital-ships now on convoy duty, which would allow a "Hunting Group" of one battlecruiser, one aircraft carrier,<sup>43</sup> and one or two 8" cruisers to move to the Indian Ocean. But, as the C.O.S. stated:

"It would, however, be strategically unsound initially to send to the Far East such an inferior force, which might well be intercepted and brought to action by superior Japanese forces before reaching Singapore .... To move ships from the Mediterranean to the Far East would be unsound, since we should undermine our whole position in the Mediterranean without achieving any compensatory advantage in the Far East."

They emphasized the importance of American intervention. They wanted the Americans to use Singapore, for only if the U.S.N. was stationed at a forward base could it seriously affect Japanese operations southwards.

Before this Appreciation was submitted to the Cabinet, British policy towards the Dutch East Indies was examined.<sup>44</sup> The strategic importance of the Dutch East Indies was recognized, yet the Cabinet realized that, without a powerful British Fleet in the area, there was little the British could do to aid the Dutch. Churchill, due to the lack of British resources, was against any formal commitment to the Dutch. But what if the Japanese did attack, should Britain go to war against Japan? On this question there was little unanimity.





The First Sea Lord, Pound, was vehemently against any commitment to the Dutch. But it was agreed that Britain could not make a decision of this magnitude that affected the Pacific Dominions, without asking their advice. Furthermore, there was a fear that American opinion would be alienated if Britain stood aside and watched Japan seize the Dutch East Indies. Nor would British prestige in the world be enhanced if she adopted a hands-off policy. The dilemma could not be resolved unless the United States came into the war. As Churchill noted, the reality was that if Japan attacked the Indies, Britain would have to fight; otherwise, "we should be allowing ourselves to be cut off from Australia and New Zealand, and they would regard our acquiescence as desertion".

Churchill was prepared to wait until the Staff Appreciation had come before the Cabinet before any final decision was made. In the meantime, the Foreign Secretary would be authorized to make a discreet approach to the Dutch, explaining that Britain would aid them, but pointing out Britain's limited resources.

The C.O.S. on August 7, 1940, reported that the situation in this respect is worse than was visualized in any previous appreciation, owing to the defeat of France and the fact that the loss of the Royal Oak and the delay in completion of the Queen Elizabeth have reduced us from 15 to 13 available battleships. It will be clear, therefore, that in the situation today, we can not produce a fleet capable of dealing with the Japanese in the Far East. 45

The best the Admiralty could do was to send a small capital-ship force to the Indian Ocean based on Ceylon to cover communications. This force

must consist of fast ships since it will be of an inferior strength to the concentration that the Japanese could produce against it. With these limitations, however, such a force might achieve



a considerable amount and provide a fair measure of security for our trade and communications, so long as the Japanese were unenterprising.

Unfortunately, the Japanese were to prove to be anything but unenterprising.

The next day, the Cabinet met to discuss the C.O.S.' Far Eastern Appreciation.<sup>46</sup> Also on the agenda was the delicate question of what the Dominions should be told. The Cabinet agreed with the C.O.S. premise that a major Japanese assault on Australia was unlikely - Japan being more likely to attack Hong Kong and the Dutch East Indies first. They concluded that:

If this appreciation (by the C.O.S.) of Japan's opening moves proves correct, we should content ourselves with sending one battlecruiser and one aircraft-carrier to the Indian Ocean, to be based on Ceylon, for the purpose of protecting our vital communications.

If a full-scale invasion of either Australia or New Zealand was threatened, the situation would be retrieved by the intervention of the United States of America. Indeed, if the United States had previously made it clear that they would not tolerate the invasion of Australia or New Zealand, the Japanese would never take the plunge.

The Cabinet agreed that the Prime Minister should cable the Pacific Dominions. The cable was sent on August 11. Churchill told the Dominions that British policy was to avoid war with Japan. He did not think that Japan would fight as long as Germany could not eliminate Britain from the war. However,

If Japan declared war on us, her first objective outside the Yellow Sea would probably be the Dutch East Indies. Evidently the United States would not like this. What they would do we cannot tell. They give no undertaking of support, but their main fleet in the Pacific must be a





grave preoccupation to the Japanese Admiralty, In the first phase of Anglo-Japanese war, we should of course defend Singapore, which if attacked (which is unlikely), ought to stand a long siege. We should also be able to base on Ceylon a battlecruiser and a fast aircraft-carrier, which with all the Australian and New Zealand cruisers and destroyers, which would return to you, would act as a very powerful deterrent upon the hostile raiding cruisers.

Churchill went on to explain that the Admiralty were about to reinforce the Mediterranean Fleet,<sup>47</sup> which could, if required, move through the Suez Canal into the Indian Ocean to relieve Singapore. But in view of the Italian challenge, he did not want to send a Fleet to the Far East until it was found "vital to your safety". He repeated the C.O.S. view that it was unlikely that Japan would mount a large expedition against Australia. The reasons Churchill gave were Japanese involvement in China, the time to gather in the prize of the East Indies, and the fear of the Japanese sending so large a part of their Fleet south, leaving the American Fleet between it and Japan.<sup>48</sup>

If, however, contrary to prudence and self-interest, Japan set about invading Australia or New Zealand on a large scale, I have the explicit authority of the Cabinet to assure you that we should then cut our losses in the Mediterranean, and sacrifice every interest, except only the defence and feeding of this island, on which all depends, and would proceed in good time to your aid with a fleet able to give battle to any Japanese force which could be placed in Australian waters, and able to parry an invading force, or certainly cut its communications with Japan.\*

---

\* Italics - mine.



The C.O.S. Appreciation was sent with Churchill's cable to Australia and received in late August. The Australian C.O.S. reviewed the report. They maintained that Singapore was of greater importance than the Middle East. They did not agree that attacks on Australia would be of a limited scope. But, realizing that Malaya had to be defended in the absence of a British fleet, by air and ground forces, the Australians did agree to the dispatch of their 7th division to that area.<sup>49</sup>

Churchill showed little enthusiasm for the proposal to send an Australian division to Malaya. In a minute to General Ismay,<sup>50</sup> he pointed out that the defence of Singapore was the fleet. The Japanese force, far from its home bases, would fall easy prey to the British Fleet, which, finding supplies and fuel at Singapore, could immediately undertake a battle. One Australian division, he stated, scattered in the vastness of Malaya, would not make any difference to the defence of that area. Churchill won his point, and Australia dispatched the division to the Middle East.<sup>51</sup>

Soon afterwards, Churchill met with the C.O.S. All three Chiefs disagreed with the Prime Minister's concept that Britain would be able, when the time came, to send a fleet to the Far East. Sir Dudley Pound stated that to put a fleet together for the Pacific would mean stripping both ends of the Mediterranean of ships and taking a major part of the Home Fleet. As he correctly pointed out, this was a risk that could not be taken at this time.

Churchill was unmoved. He believed that under present conditions, risks had to be taken. The danger to Singapore was far less than the immediate dangers to Britain and the Middle East. He adhered to the assessment he had given Ismay,





that even if Japan declared war, she would not be inclined or able to mount a major attack on Singapore. For the Japanese to send their Fleet 2,000 miles away from home would be to expose it to danger from the American Fleet on its flank and the British Fleet when it arrived. Nor did he feel that the Japanese were very formidable, particularly in the air.<sup>52</sup>

Suffice it to say that Churchill's views prevailed. Considering the state of the war and of the British naval construction programme,<sup>53</sup> it was highly doubtful if a British Fleet could have been mustered for the Far East, and thus the views of the C.O.S. should have received more attention from the Prime Minister. At the same time, Churchill fully realized that England still stood alone, her interests and obligations stretching around the world, and her material and manpower resources were near the breaking point. The necessity of the moment overcame fears for the future, and Churchill was in the immediate sense right; the Japanese were not about to pounce.

The Australians, whose concern over the Far East was always more immediate than in London, forwarded their views of the Far Eastern problem. If the Japanese attacked the Dutch East Indies, they said, Australia would be at war with Japan.<sup>54</sup> But

because of the military position in the United Kingdom and the Middle East and the attitude of the United States of America, it is the opinion of the (Australian) War Cabinet that we should not enter into a binding unilateral obligation to go to the assistance of the Dutch if Japan attacks ... It is considered that the Empire's policy should be to take a realistic view of such an act of aggression in the light of our military position at the same time."

The New Zealanders took a diametrically opposite approach. In their reply to Churchill's telegram of August 11, they





said<sup>55</sup> they wanted a firm commitment to the Dutch - and added ,

The political aspects seem to them to be even of greater importance than military, and the problem involves also the question of honour and of that indefinable, which for want of a better word, might be referred to as prestige. Our honour, our reputation for fairness and generous dealing, they feel, are amongst the most valuable attributes of the British Commonwealth - so valuable that without them, our cause might not prevail.

Solid strategy necessitated British involvement with the Dutch in the defence of the Dutch Islands, and logic dictated that if Japan did strike against them, Britain would have to fight. As the Joint Planners reported,

The Dutch should be told of our weakness, yet also that we would help them all we can. The New Zealanders have recommended that the United States be told of the nature of the situation, particularly in terms of defence arrangements with the Dutch, for their collaboration in such a policy might not be impossible to obtain.<sup>56</sup>

Events were shortly to give some urgency to consideration of British defences in the Far East as well, as to which policy should be assumed in dealing with the Dutch. On August 30, the Vichy French Ambassador at Tokyo signed an agreement with the Japanese which allowed Japan to move her forces into northern Indo-China for operations against the Chinese. On September 23, the Japanese troops crossed the frontier and took up their positions. Four days later, the substance of the agreements between Vichy and Tokyo were made public.<sup>58</sup>

If there existed any likelihood that the government of the Netherlands East Indies, and to a lesser extent that of Great Britain, could have made concessions sufficient to satisfy Japan's quest for the riches of South-East Asia, it disappeared when Japan took steps to ensure German support in



the event of her actions provoking the United States into war. On September 27, Japan signed a 10-year Mutual Assistance Pact with Italy. Germany also signed the pact, by which Japan recognized Hitler's establishment of a "New Order" in Europe, while Germany acknowledged the leadership of Japan in establishing a like order in the Far East.

Japan's hope was that the pact would weaken opposition to her policy of expansion into South-East Asia. Unfortunately for the Japanese, the Pact had the opposite effect. The Americans moved closer towards full co-operation with the British. It is now convenient to examine the growing collaboration between these two nations, and its impact on British Far Eastern naval strategy.



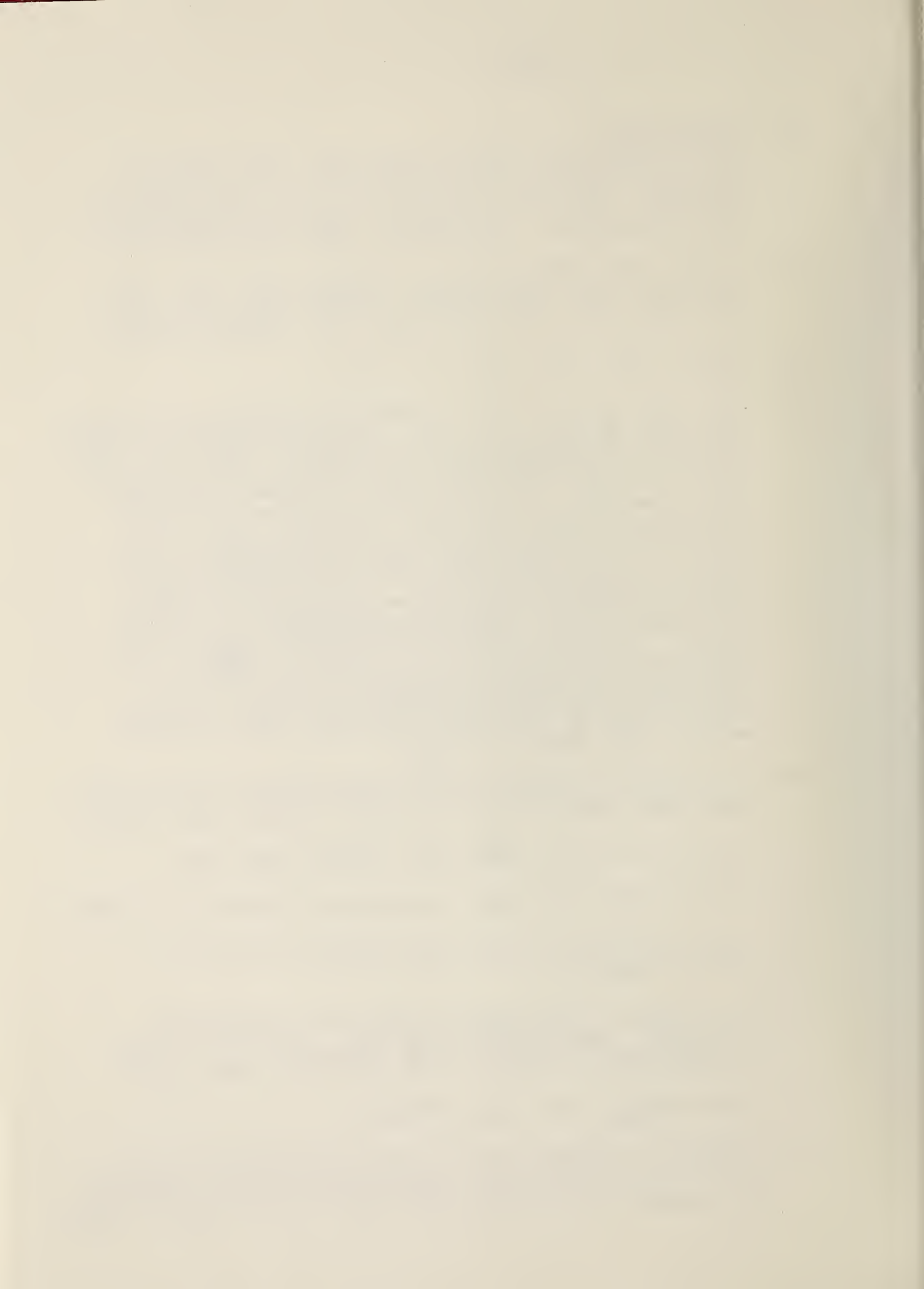


FOOTNOTES

1. J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy, London, 1957, Vol. II, pp. 323-24.
2. Lothian to Halifax, 10/11/39, D.M.V. (39)2, Cab. 99/1.
3. Australian Naval Defence, 17/11/39, D.M.V. (39)3, Cab. 99/1 and W.P. (39) 125.
4. Note by Secretary, 17/11/39, Cab. 21/893.
5. D.V.M. (39) 8th meeting, Cab. 21/893, WM39(89), 20/11/39, and W.P. (39)125.
6. Cab. 99/1.
7. D.M.V. (39) 4, 21/11/39, Cab. 99/1.
8. W.M. (39) 92, 23/11/39.
9. Adm. Memo, 21/10/19, Adm. 1/8572.
10. Roskill, Naval Policy Op. Cit., p. 290.
11. PD01633/21, May 21, Adm. 1/8607. Also O.D.C. No. 63, 5/5/21, Cab. 8/8.
12. Bd. Minute, 1352, 26/5/21, Adm. 167/64.
13. C.O.S. (39) 16, 7/18/39, Cab. 80/1. Also C.O.S. 140th meeting, 19/5/40, Cab. 4/79.
14. C.O.S. (40) 180th meeting, 19/5/40, Cab. 4/79.
15. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 417.
16. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 25. In June, the Admiralty had established the Bailey Committee to prepare plans for eventual naval co-operation with the United States Navy. The Committee, Chaired by Sir Sydney Bailey, consisted of representatives from Planning Operations, Anti-Submarine warfare and Defence Divisions. Its formation and investigations were not to be communicated to the U.S.N. Naval Attache or any



16. (continued)  
other person not directly concerned. The Committee was established on the orders of the C.N.S. Pound on 15/6/40. Pound had approved Bailey as Chairman three days previously. See PD08709 - 8722, Adm. 119/1157.
17. C.O.S. (40) 180th meeting, 13/6/39, Cab. 79/4. See also J.P. (40) 56th meeting, 10/6/40, Cab. 84/2, and J.P. (40) 238, C.O.S. (40) 454, J.P. 13/6/40, 84/15.
18. Butler, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 212.
19. Wood, Op. Cit., p. 194. So did the Australians believe. See Gill, Op. Cit., p. 255. One other factor has to be carefully noted and that is the advice tendered by Sir Robert Craigie, U.K. Ambassador to Japan, who stated that "our object should on no account be to involve the United States in the war in the Far East on our behalf. Such involvement would be disastrous to our most vital interests, since it would divert United States' attention from Europe and seriously diminish the extent of U.S. material assistance at a crucial point". S.S.D.A. to G.G.N.Z., 26/6/40, Ibid. p. 197. Considering that there was a conflict of opinion among the U.S. Chiefs of Staff on whether or not to help Britain or arm their own forces, this was good advice. See Watson, Op. Cit.
20. J.P. (40) 251, 84/15, C.O.S. (40) 469 (J.P.) Cab. 80/13, and Pound's memo, C.O.S. (40) 390, 17/6/40, Cab. 80/11.
21. Cable is in C.O.S. (40) 501, 26/6/40, Cab. 80/4.
22. Note to Ismay from Col. L.C. Hollis, 3/7/30, Cab. 21/893.
23. Ismay to Bruce, 4/7/40, Cab. 21/283, J.P. (40), 70 6/7/40, Cab. 84/2.
24. This idea of "the fleet in being" was also held by Churchill. See Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 667; and Churchill to General Ismay, 10/9/40, Cab. 21/893.
25. London Times, 25, 27 and 30/6/40.
26. Stanley K. Hornbeck, head of the Far Eastern section of the State Department, fought hard to send a squadron to Singapore as he maintained that its loss would cripple



26. (continued)  
the British Empire. Hull, Memoirs, Vol. 1, p. 915.  
See also W.M. Medlicott, The Economic Blockade, Vol. II,  
London, 1959, p. 69. For the arguments concerning  
retaining the fleet at Hawaii, and not having it return  
to the West Coast, and the Fleet's use as a weapon of  
diplomacy, see Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., pp. 43-44,  
and Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 414-17. For the Japanese  
warnings and American reaction, see Documents on American  
Foreign Relations, III, 280ff, and Foreign Relations  
of the United States; Japan, 11 171,ff.
27. Hull, Memoirs, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, pp. 896-8.
28. Ibid. p. 899.
29. See J.P. (40) 298, Cab. 84/15, C.O.S. (40) 506, Cab.  
80/14, and W.P. (40) 234, 1/7/40, also W.M. (40) 173,  
Tokyo Tele 1032, W.M. (40) 90, 5/7/40.
30. H. Feis, The Road to Pearl Harbor, Princeton, 1950,  
Chapter XI.
31. See for example report of Visit by Cdr. Wooten (Trade  
Division) to C-in-C Western Approaches on 21/10/39,  
Report 22/10/39.
32. W.P. (40) 53, 2/3/40.
33. See Postan, Op. Cit., pp. 61-63 and W.P. (E) (39)15,  
19/9/39. Also Wm. (40)18, 19/1/40, W.P.(E) (90) 183,  
9/7/40, Wm. (40) 254, 19/9/40, and W.P. (40) 365,  
9/9/40.
34. W.P.(40)95, 13/3/40.
35. W.M.(40)67, 13/3/40.
36. W.M. (40)144, 28/5/40, Minute 10.
37. W.P.(40)349, 9/10/40.
38. W.M.(40)277, 25/10/40.





39. There were serious problems concerning Dominion co-operation. For example, would the Dominion Governments delegate executive authority to their representatives in London to make commitments on behalf of their Governments? Also the British Officers who were in London. More important, the British did not wish to be encumbered with the Dominion representatives crowding meetings of the various Planning Groups engaged in the desperate day to day conduct of the war. (J.P.(40) 330, 19/7/40, Cab. 84/16.), see also C.O.S. (40)796, Cab. 80/19.
40. U.K.H.C. to S.S. Dominions Te. 280, 9/7/40, Cab. 84/16. Also J.P. (40) 327, 11/7/40, Cab. 84/16, and J.P. (40) 70th meeting 6/7/40, Cab. 84/2.
41. C.O.S. (40)592, 29/7/40 and C.O.S. (40)596, 1/8/40, Cab. 80/15. Also J.P.(40)370, Cab. 84/17, and W.P.(40) 289, 1/8/40.
42. C.O.S. (40)596, (J.P.) 1/8/40, Cab. 80/15.
43. See W.P.(40)302, 31/7/40.
44. W.M.(40)214, 29/7/40.
45. C.O.S. (40)605, 7/8/40, Cab. 80/16, also C.O.S. (40)592 (Roure), Cab. 80/16.
46. W.M.(40)222, 8/8/40.
47. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 441-42.
48. J.P.(40)433(S), also C.O.S. (40)592, 13/8/40, Cab. 80/15, and W.P.(40)302, 11/8/40, Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 435-36.
49. Paul Hasluck, The Government and The People, 1939-1941, Canberra, 1952, p. 224.
50. Prime Minister to General Ismay, 10/9/40 in Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 667-68.
51. Butler, Op. Cit., p. 338.
52. Ibid. pp. 338-39, also C.O.S. (40)568, Cab. 80/15, and C.O.S. (40)572, Cab. 80/15.



53. See for example, Churchill to First Lord, 15/9/40, in Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 668-69.
54. Telegram 4549, 28/8/40, in J.P.(40) 433(S), Cab. 84/18. Also Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 227.
55. Telegram 15/8/40 in Ibid.  
The New Zealand Government was strongly against any appeasement of Japan: they had observed appeasement at work and saw how it paved the path to war. Above all, they wished for an official public statement of the Commonwealth's promise to defend the Indies, pointing out the loss in prestige and the impact on American opinion if they deserted obvious obligations. Wood, Op. Cit., p. 198. If the reader is amazed at the differences of opinion between the two dominions, considering they faced the same danger, he will be more amazed to note that real co-operation between the two came only after the Japanese attack. Wood, Op. Cit., p. 80.
56. J.P.(40)433(S), Op. Cit.
57. Japanese Monograph No. 146, U.S. Army Forces, Far East.
58. W.L. Langer, and S.E. Gleason, The Undeclared War, 1940-1941, London, 1953, p. 30. Also Feis, Op. Cit., Chapter XV.





## CHAPTER IX

### THE START OF BRITISH-AMERICAN CO-OPERATION

For the British, co-operation with the United States was of paramount importance. In early 1940, the Admiralty had appointed a special committee to review the form of American aid that was to be sought, together with areas of American and British operations, responsibilities in such areas, and the methods of co-operation best suited to impart and exchange information to and with the United States Navy. As a result of this committee's report, the British suggested that informal talks be held either in London or Washington between British and American Staffs. Soon after, the President sent a senior Admiral to London. On July 12, 1940, Rear-Admiral Robert Ghormley, the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations, who was already fully informed about naval planning,<sup>1</sup> was sent to London as part of an American mission which included members of the U.S.A.A.F.<sup>2</sup>

In London, the Joint Planners immediately started to make preparations for the talks and the arrival of the Americans.<sup>3</sup> In a draft memorandum, they advised that the whole Pacific should be an American responsibility with the exception of Australia and New Zealand.

The order of British priorities, they stated was the defence of the United Kingdom, the defence of the sea-communications, the Middle East, the retention of Malaya, and the defence of the Pacific Dominions and India.

The terms of reference of the American group seemed obscure. When they arrived, they did not act as a joint mission. Each member of the group wanted from the British information on the "lessons of war" that had emerged so far. On the British



side, they felt that time was too short to go into polite exchanges of this sort. They wanted full-scale combined staff conversations.<sup>4</sup>

The British Chiefs of Staff entered the conversations armed with the memorandum previously drawn up by the Joint Planners.<sup>5</sup> On the Far East, the Joint Planners had reported that the Japanese move into Indo-China allowed them to attack Malaya overland, and that the Japanese acquisition of bases for long-range aircraft posed a new threat to Singapore. Whatever hope there had been of dispatching a fleet to the Far East had gone with the entry of Italy into the war and the collapse of the French. In the event of Japan coming into the war (and it was British policy to avoid this as long as possible), Singapore had to be held. The base was the key to the whole British position in the Far East.

In respect to the Pacific Dominions, the J.P.S.C. held to their conviction that the Japanese would be unlikely to assault the Dominions so long as Singapore was a base for the "Fleet in Being". But, "the support of the whole American battlefleet would ... transform the ... strategical situation in the Far East".

The C.O.S.<sup>6</sup> told the Americans\* that British grand strategy was to knock Italy out of the war as quickly as

---

\* The American Delegation consisted of Ghormley; Brig. Gen. G.V. Strong, U.S.A.; Maj. Gen. D.C. Emmons, U.S.A. A.F.; Col. Raymond E. Lee, Military Attaché; and Capt. Alan Kirk, Naval Attaché. The British were represented by the C.A.S.; Air-Marshal Sir Cyril Newall (Chairman); Pound; and Gen. Sir John Dill, C.I.G.S. For Lee's views, see James Leutze, The London Journal of General Raymond E. Lee, Toronto, 1971, pp. 41-42, and Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 113-14.





possible in order to free British naval forces to meet the Japanese threat.

Rear-Admiral Ghormley asked if the Americans withdrew some of their ships from the Pacific to the Atlantic, would the British then consider reinforcing Singapore with a portion of the Royal Navy?

Pound told Ghormley that all the Admiralty could agree to send to the Far East was one battlecruiser and one aircraft-carrier. These ships would be based on Ceylon, not Singapore, and would only be dispatched when Japan came into the war. British policy was now based on controlling the Indian Ocean, rather than attempting to reach Singapore. As Pound noted, it would take a British fleet of at least eight or nine capital ships, plus other fleet units, to deal effectively with the Japanese Navy. At present, the British could not even spare the necessary six or seven destroyer flotillas to accompany a fleet to the Far East.

As a result of these talks, American Army Officers drew up a report on the course American planning should now take. They added a warning that the danger of Japanese attack would become more acute,<sup>7</sup>

if the Japanese Government should become increasingly embarrassed by embargoes on exports from the United States to Japan, and at the same time, should become convinced that despite protests by the United States, it was only throwing a bluff and would back down in the face of a serious situation.

Thus matters stood. General Strong's hope, expressed in London, for a permanent exchange of military views, lay dormant until after the American election on November 12. But by that time, the Japanese had signed the Tripartite Pact and had made their move into Indo-China.<sup>8</sup>





Before the Election, there had been a noticeable shift in American strategic doctrine. The Army's former insistence on the priority of the Atlantic was beginning to have effect on the Navy. It came to the fore when the Standing Liaison Committee met on October 5 to discuss the Churchill telegram asking for the dispatch of an American naval force to Singapore.<sup>9</sup>

It was unanimously agreed that no ships should be sent. As Admiral Stark pointed out, this might precipitate Japanese action against the United States and "every day that we are able to maintain peace and still support the British is valuable time gained".<sup>10</sup> The Army and Navy planners found themselves agreed that Germany was enemy number one. Stark reiterated, in reference to Singapore, that the "vital theatre was the Eastern Atlantic, and the Western Pacific a secondary one".<sup>11</sup>

It was this last conclusion that led the planners, especially General Strong, to ask the President to make some decision as to what action should be taken. Apparently, the President did nothing until after the Election, and it was this lack of decision that led Stark to submit a further presentation to Secretary of the Navy Knox.

The result of Stark's memorandum, which was circulated to all the Chiefs of the Armed Services, was that the concept of hemisphere defence was adopted. Plan D (or 'Dog'), which meant that the Atlantic was to be the major theatre, with a defensive posture in the Pacific,<sup>12</sup> was to be the basis for future planning. Talks were held with the British in London, the Canadians in Washington, and the British and Dutch in Singapore and Batavia, "to reach agreement and lay down plans for promoting unity of allied effort should the United States



find it necessary to enter the war".<sup>13</sup>

Plan 'Dog'<sup>14</sup> was the first attempt to deal with American military strategy as a whole, embracing both the Army and the Navy, and assuming the co-operation of the British. Stark pointed out that

if Britain wins decisively against Germany, we could win everywhere; but if she loses, the problem confronting us would be very great; and while we might not lose everywhere, we might, possibly, not win anywhere.<sup>15</sup>

Stark proceeded to examine the alternative plans for Pacific operations. He immediately rejected the idea of unlimited war against Japan, and dealt with a limited war against that power which would reduce her war-capacity through economic blockade. This could be accomplished by

holding the Malaya Barrier, denying access to other sources of supply in Malaysia, severing her lines of communication with the Western hemisphere, and raiding communications to the Mid-Pacific, the Philippines, China and Indo-China.<sup>16</sup>

Had this strategy been adopted, it would have been necessary to reinforce Alaska and Hawaii, to establish naval bases in the Fiji-Samoan and Gilbert Island areas, to deny Japan the use of the Marshalls, and to reinforce the Philippines with aircraft. To hold the Malaya Barrier, the United States would have had to assist the British and Dutch with not only the Asiatic Squadron, but with ships and aircraft drawn from the main fleet at Hawaii. The other alternative was to strike at the flank of Japanese forces, thus drawing off the strength of a Japanese assault on Malaya.

The objections to a limited war were the results to be gained from the price to be paid: it would hinder the transfer of American ships to the Atlantic, and it could become an un-





limited war, if only as a result of public impatience.

American policy in the Far East was to avoid a clash with Japan, and to aid the United Kingdom in spite of the risks involved.

The Army Chiefs accepted this summary. The President did not read the memorandum, but he did authorize conversations with the British.<sup>17</sup> To this end, a British delegation was to come to Washington as civilian members of the British Purchasing Commission. Before they arrived, a conference between the President and his military advisers took place, during which the President emphasized that aid to the United Kingdom must be carried on. He was ready to have the navy convoy ships sent to England if need be. But the American planners were told that-

we cannot afford, nor do we need to entrust our national future to British direction... It is to be expected that proposals of the British representatives will have been drawn up with the chief regard for the support of the British Commonwealth. Never absent from British minds are their post-war interests, commercial and military. We should likewise safeguard our own eventual interests.<sup>18</sup>

The planners were to work with the British on the basis of two possible assumptions: that the United States was at war allied with the British, and that she had accepted the concept of "Germany First".

The planners who were due to meet the British delegation were given a very explicit definition of American policy toward Japan.<sup>19</sup> In the event of the United States entering the war as an active participant, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff believed that:

United States operations in the mid-Pacific and the Far East should be conducted in such a



manner as to facilitate the exertion of its principal military effort in the Atlantic or the Mediterranean.

So, as the British delegation approached Washington, they anticipated agreement on the "Germany First" policy. The conflict of views centred on Singapore: it was never to be resolved.

Meanwhile, London was alarmed by Japanese actions in Indo-China and pressure upon the Dutch East Indies.<sup>20</sup> The Netherlands East Indies were seen as a vital British interest, but the Cabinet had not seen fit to announce this publicly, or to give a hard-and-fast guarantee to the Dutch. The Dominions were looking for some sign of a policy towards the Indies from London, and certainly there were strong arguments to support the Dutch on moral as well as strategic grounds.<sup>21</sup>

In the Netherlands East Indies during 1939, informal conversations between British and Dutch officials had taken place concerning local defence and deployment of forces; but since that time, the whole strategic war-situation had changed.

Holland was now under German occupation, and the Netherlands East Indies were isolated. In August 1940, the C-in-C of the Indies, Vice-Admiral C.E.L. Helfrich, who was strongly in favour of more active Allied co-operation, proposed to the C-in-C China, Admiral Noble, that certain arrangements should be made about mutual defence. From this suggestion came secret informal conversations between the various Military Staffs of Britain and the Netherlands East Indies. But the British were against anything that could be construed as official or involving any definite commitment.<sup>22</sup>

However, the signing of the Tripartite Pact by the Axis





powers gave further impetus for Allied Far Eastern defence arrangements.<sup>23</sup> But the British planners were still uncertain about whether they wanted Americans to get involved in a Far Eastern war. Churchill believed that American involvement in the Far East would "not be in our interest" as it would detract from the main theatre of operations and curtail American material aid to the United Kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

In early October, the Joint Planners<sup>25</sup> examining the Far Eastern problem with reference to the Tripartite Pact, noted that the Pact was aimed at the United States, and was an attempt by Germany to distract American attention from Europe. They felt that the huge war-potential of the United States, once mobilized, could well take care of a two-ocean war.

This we believe would ensure an even greater supply of material for us, as apart from naval forces, the United States is not likely to deploy very large military forces against Japan, and consequently will not expend large material resources on a Far Eastern war.

The planners also realized that if Britain did not aid the Dutch in the Far East, American opinion might be alienated. Further, not to support the Dutch might well undermine the whole British defence system there. Thus, the Planners strongly recommended that Staff Talks take place with the Dutch at Singapore.<sup>26</sup>

In London, it had been assumed that the talks held with the Americans the month previously were only a prelude to more extensive conversations that would take place after the American Elections.<sup>27</sup> The Americans agreed that talks would be held after the political dust had settled;<sup>28</sup> but they strongly advocated that preliminary conversations be held between the Dutch and British in preparation for the later





### Anglo-American Staff Conversations.

The sequence of conversations suggested by the Americans, was that there should be a conference at Singapore, followed by preliminary talks in London, which would lead to Anglo-American conversations in Washington.

On October 6, 1940, in preparation for this series of Staff Talks, the C.O.S. drew up terms of reference for the first conference, to be held at Singapore.<sup>29</sup> They assumed certain probabilities: that the Americans would not intervene; or conversely, that their active participation could be assured; and that the Dutch would or would not enter the war. The strategic plan the C.O.S. suggested should be based on the British Far Eastern War Memorandum.

The major question, as far as the C.O.S. were concerned, was how the U.S.N. could take the place of the Royal Navy in the Far East. They felt that the U.S.N. should base its plans on the British plans, with one major change: Manila, not Singapore, would be the main fleet base. But, as they reported, that with American intervention,

the defence problem must now include the defence of the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies as well as our own interests. For this reason, we consider that Manilla (provided that the local defences are adequate) would be more suitable than Singapore or Honolulu as the main fleet operational base.

But the scope of the conversations were to be expanded. The Pacific Dominions demanded that the delegates consider the whole defence problem of the Far East, rather than the defence of Malaya and the East Indies. However, the First Singapore Conference was confined to the British Commonwealth, for the Dutch had only agreed to exchanges of information in London,



and were waiting on the results of the American election before committing themselves.<sup>30</sup>

When the Conference delegates assembled in Singapore in late October,<sup>31</sup> they had before them the C.O.S. appreciation of the Far Eastern defence problem,<sup>32</sup> an exact replica of that made the previous August. The C.O.S. repeated that the lynch-pin of British Far Eastern defence rested on a fleet based at Singapore. As before, they pointed out that until Germany and Italy had their naval strength drastically reduced, the defence of the Far East had to be confined to retaining a foothold until sufficient forces became available to retrieve the situation.

The Chiefs of Staff repeated yet once more. that the Japanese probably would not attack as long as Singapore held out and the British Fleet was still in existence. While she might retain her step-by-step policy, which was attempting to exclude British influence from China and Hong Kong, there was a possibility also that she might risk war with the United States and the British Empire. In this event, her first move would be into Indo-China and perhaps Siam, to be followed in time by an assault on the Dutch East Indies, as preparation for a direct assault on Singapore.

The Chiefs of Staff continued on the assumption that, even if Japan obtained footholds in Siam and Indo-China and thus made the defence of Singapore and Burma more difficult, such a move should not be a case for war with Japan. But, should the Japanese strike at the Indies, Britain should offer immediate military and economic aid to the Dutch, provided they resisted.

It is interesting that the Chiefs of Staff still felt that the Japanese order of priority was to be the Indies, then





Singapore. Simultaneous landings at both places were not considered, nor did it seem to occur to the Chiefs of Staff that the converse move might be made by the Japanese, i.e. take Singapore to GET THE INDIES; not to take the Indies to get at Singapore.

In some respects, the report had a certain unreal quality to it. The overall thesis was that the defence of Singapore rested on the defence of Malaya, while the defence of the Far East was based on Singapore, which was only functional if a fleet was available to operate from it; but, as the C.O.S. reported, the naval forces were not available.

The Conference itself dealt with the dispositions of the naval forces that might be available if war broke out.<sup>33</sup> Australian and New Zealand ships would return to their own waters, while the R.N. could provide at best the aircraft carrier, Ark Royal, and the battlecruiser Renown, for trade protection in the Indian Ocean. The forces available in total were meager when compared to the Japanese, but as the Conference well knew, the naval situation in British waters was too desperate to spare anything for the Far East.

The report of the Service Commanders on the spot, which was reviewed by the Conference, varied little in its pessimism from the Chiefs of Staff's Appreciation, with the exception that in their detailed analysis, they felt that the number of first-line aircraft needed was 582, as opposed to the Chiefs of Staff figure of 336. The Air Force was assigned the major role not only of sinking an invading fleet, but of shattering any enemy formations that landed. With the number of aircraft proposed, the ground-forces could be reduced to 23 battalions, eight more than the Chiefs of Staff had recommended.<sup>34</sup>

An assault on Australia and New Zealand, it was felt,



would not occur immediately after hostilities, but it was agreed that the two Dominions should have forces ready to deal with such an enemy incursion if it did take place.

Following the Singapore Conference, conversations were held with Dutch authorities from the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>35</sup> A list of topics to be discussed had previously been drawn up at the Singapore Conference,<sup>36</sup> and with the re-election of President Roosevelt, the Netherlands East Indies Service Chiefs felt encouraged enough to exchange views with their British counterparts. The conference took place between November 25 and 29 at Singapore.

The object was to work out arrangements for mutual support in the event of war with Japan. It was decided that the Dutch naval forces would primarily be used for local defence, and to help hold the gateway to the Indian Ocean. However, it was only with air forces that transfers of support could be effectively arranged. It was decided that three Dutch squadrons would be transferred to Malaya and four British to Sumatra. Unfortunately, the Dutch were wholly dependent for war materials on overseas supplies, primarily from the United States.<sup>37</sup> The Indies were low in priority order for American aid, and what was available was of almost no value to the final outcome.

While the various conferences were taking place at Singapore, the British and Americans were again meeting in London. These talks were the result of the President's initiative in proposing such conversations in June, and the realization after the Anglo-American talks in September that further staff conversations were needed. While the American elections had put such meetings in abeyance, low-level meetings between





Admiral Ghormley and the British in London were conducted to prepare the way for the larger, more extensive conference to be held later in Washington.<sup>38</sup>

Admiral Ghormley, who had stayed behind after the other American Service representatives had left in September, had submitted a questionnaire to the Chairman of the British Delegation to Washington concerning British Far Eastern naval policy.<sup>39</sup> Ghormley's questionnaire was based on the assumption that the British would have to fight Japan alone.

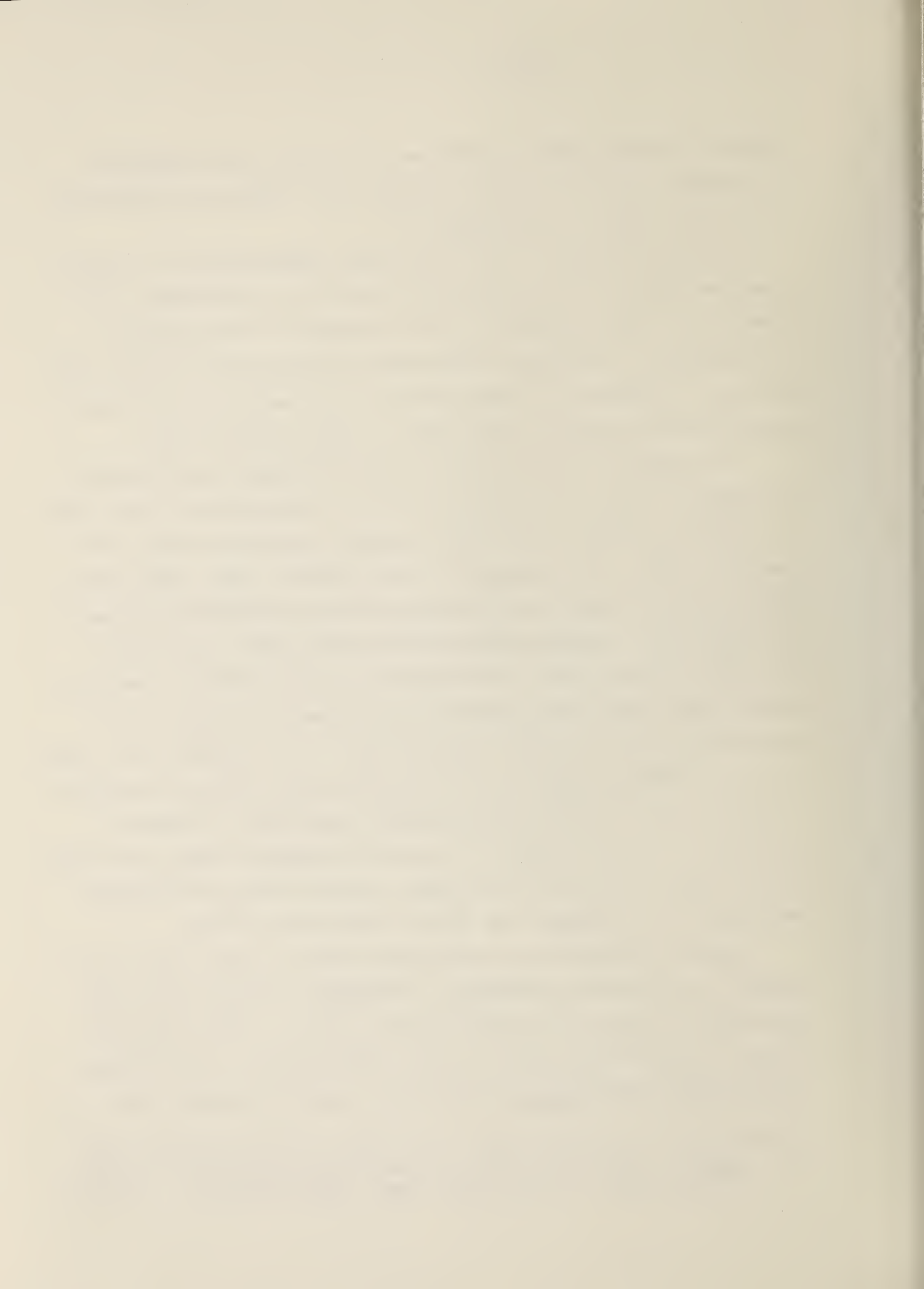
In reply,<sup>40</sup> the British informed Ghormley, as they had in August, that in the present naval circumstances they could not deploy anything near the strength required to meet the Japanese Navy. To produce the nine capital ships which they felt would be needed would mean giving up the Mediterranean and Gibraltar, taking one battleship from home waters and two from convoy work. To withdraw the heavy ships from home waters and convoy duty would leave Britain so weak in the Atlantic as to be "quite unacceptable". To withdraw the Fleet from the Mediterranean would jeopardize the British position in that area. In the circumstances described, it was impossible for the British to provide an Eastern Fleet, and even if the heavy ships were available, there were no destroyers available to accompany any fleet sent east of Suez.

Having outlined the precarious nature of the naval situation, the British introduced a strategic concept that had been mooted before by Pound and the C.O.S. - the sending of a small capital ship force to the Indian Ocean. Consisting of Ark Royal and Renown,\* the force, based on Ceylon, was to

---

\* Renown, completed 1916, extensively modernized 1936-39, 32,000 tons, 6 x 15" Guns, Max. speed 29 kts. (cont.)





protect communications to the Middle East and around the Cape. According to the Admiralty, these fast ships could range the seas and achieve a "considerable amount".

The point to note was that the Admiralty seemed to be applying to the Pacific the lessons of the Atlantic. In the latter, German surface units such as Hipper and Scheer had ranged along the convoy routes,<sup>41</sup> causing considerable damage and had required large British forces to track them down. It seemed logical to the Admiralty - for reasons best known to themselves - that a similar British force, operating in the Indian Ocean, could cause the Japanese equal discomfort. Furthermore, the Japanese, by having to split their forces to seek out the small British force, would be vulnerable to an American attack on the flank and would hesitate before moving too far into the South Pacific. It was a strategic concept concerning the deployment of naval forces in the Far East that was to be adhered to tenaciously by the Admiralty and by Churchill. A glance at a small-scale map might possibly have got rid of the concept at once.

At the same time that the exchanges were taking place with Ghormley, the British were equally busy formulating the terms of reference and a strategic summary for the talks in Washington.<sup>42</sup> In their view, the object of the conversations should be

to co-ordinate on broad lines plans for the employment of British, Dominion, American and Dutch forces in the event of war with Japan. Discussions may be extended to cover the conduct of the war as a whole.

---

\* Ark Royal, aircraft carrier. Completed 1938.  
Carried 60 aircraft, max. speed 31 kts.



The strategic basis should be the British Far Eastern Appreciation,<sup>43</sup> and the C.O.S. future strategy appreciation.<sup>44</sup> The talks did not imply any political commitment on the part of the Americans; but as the British stated, to confine the talks to an exchange of information without making joint plans "would be of little value".

The British felt that the presence of the American Battle Fleet in the Far East would curtail the likelihood of a seaborne attack on Malaya or the East Indies. In dealing with the deployment of the U.S.N., the British again suggested that they adopt the British War Memorandum, substituting their Fleet for that of the British. The major questions yet to be answered was how far the Americans could or would go to make up the deficiencies in British naval strength and from just what base they would operate.

In terms of a Command structure, the British were quite willing to have the Pacific become an American Theatre, except for local waters adjacent to Australia and New Zealand, the Indies and Singapore. The Indian Ocean would remain a British responsibility.

On one issue the British were definite.<sup>45</sup> They stressed the importance of Singapore:

we see no reason, therefore, to change the views we have always expressed, mainly that the foundation of our strategy in the Far East must be the basing on Singapore of a fleet which is strong enough to provide cover for our communications in the Indian Ocean and South-West Pacific, and to frustrate any large expedition which the Japanese may attempt against British territory."

In the absence of a British Fleet, however, everything would depend on the American Fleet being available and taking the place of the Royal Navy east of Suez. The greatest deter-





rent to Japanese action, according to the C.O.S., was the threat posed by the American Fleet, and "it goes without saying that we should use every endeavour to secure American co-operation in intimidating Japan".<sup>46</sup>

Before the British Delegation left for Washington, they submitted their own memorandum concerning Allied strategy in the Far East for consideration by the C.O.S.<sup>47</sup> The memorandum stated that the main focus of the Allied effort had to be against Germany, and only minimum forces should be sent east to safeguard the Allied position in that theatre. This differed little from previous appreciations, but noted that while the problem was a naval one, the absence of a fleet thrust the burden on to air and land forces. In the existing situation, Singapore would have to withstand an assault for three months while local naval forces harassed Japanese sea-communications, but refrained from engaging the main Japanese Fleet. Notwithstanding the present lack of naval strength, the memorandum stressed that

The whole strategy of the war is governed by the arrival in Far Eastern waters of a fleet, including capital ships, in sufficient strength to be able to engage the Japanese Fleet, should it be encountered: the importance of Singapore in relation to this fact is obvious.

To achieve the objective, the presence of a balanced fleet capable of meeting the Japanese Navy was required. The only fleet available was the American, for all the British could do was to send a small force east to cover the Indian Ocean. The size of that fleet was, and had always been estimated to consist of at least eight capital ships, plus three aircraft carriers with supporting light units.

The Japanese objective would be to get Singapore. It



was the British opinion that a direct assault on Singapore was unlikely. It was also believed that before Japan attacked the East Indies, she would have to seize the Philippines, which lay astride Japanese lines of communications to Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies.

To accomplish the allied strategy, it was concluded that the fleet should be based on Singapore with an advance base at Manila. It was also felt that the size of the American fleet should be as outlined, and it would be a great advantage if it could be based on Singapore before the start of hostilities.

The chairman of the British Delegation, Rear-Admiral R.M. Bellairs, added his own comments in a covering note attached to his delegation's memorandum. He pointed out some inherent problems in explaining British strategy in the Far East, particularly in terms of soliciting American aid. Bellairs noted that British forces "were at present insufficient to safeguard the fortress of Singapore for a sufficient length of time to allow for the arrival of a battle fleet." He went on to state that as long as the Far Eastern situation was a matter that concerned the British alone, it was open "to us to accept the risks entailed by these deficiencies", and in fact the British had little choice due to commitments elsewhere. However, when the matter became one of arranging joint plans with the Americans and Dutch, the British were placed in some difficulty. On one hand, we shall say to the Americans that the whole safety of the Far East depends upon the arrival of their battle fleet at Singapore". Yet, "on the other hand, we shall also have to say that we have not placed a garrison in Malaya sufficiently powerful to ensure that the base at Singapore will be intact when the United





States Fleet arrives".

The result, as Bellairs envisioned it, would be that the Americans would not consider sending their fleet to the Far East, and leave the British to cope with the situation on their own. In these circumstances, Bellairs believed that the situation would be rectified if the British could give the Americans a firm commitment to reinforce Malaya by a specific date. In this case, the British could tell the Americans that they realized that a risk was being run, but that the risk would be only for a limited period, after which the threat of a Japanese attack could be "faced with confidence". In addition, such a statement would give confidence to the Dominions who would be very disturbed by the disclosure of the desperate nature of the situation.

The C.O.S. duly noted the memorandum and Bellairs' covering note. They realized that what Bellairs said was essentially irrefutable, but there was little that could be done to reinforce Malaya. But before the British sailed to Washington they were shown the American strategic plan, when the British Assistant Naval Attaché in Washington, Capt. A. W. Clarke, was given access to the American Plan D (Dog). Now for the first time,<sup>48</sup> the British were made aware of the American overall strategy. Not only did it run counter to British aspirations of getting the Americans to underwrite their position in the Far East, but as Clarke informed the Admiralty,<sup>49</sup> the American Naval Staff were of the opinion "that (the) British conception is based on selfish defence of British interests only and has taken no account of American interests". It would leave America naked, and "was the equivalent to Americans proposing to dispatch a British





Mediterranean Fleet to Singapore to safeguard the Philippines".

In a further telegram,<sup>50</sup> Clarke stated that:

"Naturally I resisted firmly accusations of self-defence and parochial interests, but (I) have been impressed by evident existence of settled resistance to dispatch of (American) Fleet to Singapore and consequent acceptance of our strategic arguments".

Ghormley reinforced what Clarke had been telling London. He informed Admiral Bailey that he did not want to convey to the Navy Department that the British position was "cast iron". He also pointed out that there was a section of American public opinion which felt Britain could not win the war even with American help, and that the British demand for the U.S.N. to be based on Singapore was to pull "British chestnuts out of the fire - a cry constantly raised by the Isolationists".<sup>51</sup>

Faced with this American attitude, Pound informed Ghormley<sup>52</sup> that the British position was indeed flexible, and that British plans unfortunately had not taken American public opinion or press comments into account, "factors it is difficult for us to assess from this side of the Atlantic".

But Churchill had no qualms concerning the American Plan D. In a minute dated November 22, 1940, he informed the C.O.S.<sup>53</sup> that Plan D well suited British interests. He was convinced that regardless of what the Americans said, once the United States was in the war there would be ample naval forces available to control the Japanese, so "long as a superior battle fleet is maintained at Singapore or Honolulu".<sup>54</sup> The Japanese, Churchill believed, would never attempt the seizure of Singapore with a superior American Fleet in the Pacific. "A strict defensive posture in the Far East and the acceptance of its consequences is also our policy..."I am



much encouraged", Churchill concluded, "by the American view that we are not capable of winning alone."

In the meantime, there had been a brief flurry of activity when the C.O.S. had received a memorandum from R.A. Butler, Chairman of the inter-departmental Far Eastern Committee\*. This had been addressed to the First Lord, and concerned Japanese moves in south-east Asia. Butler asked if because of the recent defeat inflicted upon the Italian Navy by the fleet air arm attack on Taranto, perhaps the Admiralty could spare one or two capital ships to be based on Singapore.<sup>55</sup> Butler felt that the ships would act as a deterrent to any further Japanese moves. The C.O.S. reported on the Butler memorandum, and stated that such a move would be too "ostentatious and provocative to Japan" and could well give the impression to the Americans that the U.S.N. was not required at Singapore. They also felt that the best plan, should any ships be sent, was that already enunciated - that a battle-cruiser and carrier be stationed on Ceylon when occasion demanded.<sup>56</sup>

This view was supported by the First Sea Lord and the First Lord. The latter minuted Halifax, stating that regardless of the favourable situation in the Mediterranean, no ships could be spared for the Far East, and that the greatest

---

\* The Far Eastern Committee had been established in October 1940, to keep under review British policy in the Far East, and to consider counter measures against Japan, should it enter the war. The chairman was R.A. (Rab) Butler. The Committee owed its inception to Japanese moves into Indo-China.





deterrent to the Japanese would be the American Fleet at Hawaii.<sup>57</sup>

It is not surprising that when the C.O.S. put the finishing touches to the instructions for the British delegation to Washington, the importance of "willing and active co-operation" of the Americans in the Far East should have loomed large.<sup>58</sup>

Certainly, considering what they had told the Far Eastern Committee, the C.O.S. were not about to give up the fight to have an American fleet stationed on Singapore. They did accept that the Americans might be unwilling to place a fleet there (a mastery of understatement). They suggested that the Americans would realize that to conduct operations against the Japanese with any hope of success, their fleet would have to move westwards, which meant basing it on Singapore. If the Americans did not accept this idea, the British Delegation were to press for the United States Navy to reinforce its Asiatic Fleet with two capital ships - which would be based on Singapore. For their part, the British would dispatch Renown and Ark Royal to the Indian Ocean to cover sea communications.<sup>59</sup>

It is surprising that the British, who were now fully aware of American opposition to any "forward" strategy in the Far East, should have persisted in pressing the Americans to station ships at Singapore, and to take on the burden of defending British interests in south-east Asia. It is probable that the British C.O.S. had been informed that Admiral Stark's Plan D, while accepted by the War Department Planners, had never received the imprimatur of the President, or the State Department.<sup>60</sup> Knowing this, the C.O.S. might have assumed that Plan D was not final, but only a working document open to



alteration once the British had a chance to give their views to the Americans.

Regardless of what the C.O.S. might instruct the British Delegation concerning Far Eastern strategy, Churchill had the final say. In a minute of December 7 <sup>61</sup> (ironically, a year before the Pearl Harbor attack) he wrote that "if they (the Americans) prefer Hawaii to Singapore, there is no more to be said". Eight days later, at a meeting of the Defence Committee Operations,\* the Prime Minister elaborated on his previous minute.<sup>62</sup> British naval strategy "should be one of deference to the United States in all matters concerning the Pacific theatre of war".

If the Delegation adopted this attitude, it might well be that as the war proceeded, the Americans might spontaneously wish to enter more fully into the conflict against Japan, and thus be led of their own volition to send more considerable forces to Singapore. Nothing should stand in the way of the main principle, which was that all efforts should be directed to the defeat of Germany - the minimum force being left to hold Japan in check.

It is worth noting that Churchill as Prime Minister changed British priorities concerning global strategy. Backed by the First Sea Lord, Dudley Pound, he elevated the Middle East to a position of strategic importance second only to the United Kingdom. The Middle East was where the

---

\* The Defence Committee Operations (DC(O)) was the Military Co-ordination Committee renamed, and worked in two sections: one which dealt with operations, the other with supply. The PM as Minister of Defence, chaired both committees. The Operations Committee consisted of the C.O.S., the three service ministers, the Foreign Secretary, the Deputy PM (Attlee) and the Minister of Aircraft Production, Lord Beaverbrook.





British were at grips with the enemy, and Churchill, a product of the Victorian Age, was imbued with the historical British policy of always securing the gateway to India. Everything beyond what was necessary to secure the United Kingdom was allocated to the Middle East, and with British resources so stretched, there was little to spare for the Far East, where the likelihood of war was never firmly established.

To Churchill, the Japanese, tied up in China and fearful of the United States, would not be so rash as to enter the war, particularly as it was becoming more and more certain that Britain would not be broken by the Germans. And Churchill was convinced that the United States would enter the war if Japan attacked, and the forces of the United States would prevent any wide-ranging Japanese successes in Asia.

Coupled with this basic premise was the belief that Singapore could hold out, and therefore the Japanese fearing the arrival of the British Fleet, would not move into the South Pacific. Part of this strategic formulation was the Japanese fear of the American Navy operating on its flanks. Ironically, the Americans were to take the place held by the Japanese prior to 1914 - that of protecting British interests in Asia.

These interests included the defence of the Pacific Dominions. Neither Chamberlain nor Churchill ever fully informed the Dominions just how flimsy was the promise to send a fleet to the Far East, should Japan enter the war. To the British, the Far East was remote, and quiet. Furthermore, the view from London was always that Japan would never attempt a full-scale attack on the Dominions. The British, looking





at the maps of the distances involved, and the position of the U.S.N. at Hawaii, held that Australian fears were exaggerated. But to the Dominions, looking at the same maps in Canberra and Wellington, the distances seemed smaller, and their fears based on realities. In London, the defence of the Dominions had become separate from the defence of Singapore. If the latter fell, it did not imply that the Pacific Dominions were in immediate danger. As far as the British were concerned, an assault on the base was different from a major attack on the Dominions. In the case of the latter, a fleet would be sent; in case of the former, perhaps not. To the Dominions, their own defence and that of Singapore were one and the same; there was no neat strategic separation.

Nor did they have Churchill's faith that the Americans would come into the war if Japan attacked. Here too there is an irony; the British strategic plan taken to Washington entrusted the defence of the Eastern Empire and the Dominions to the United States. Yet one of the major reasons for building Singapore and promising to send a fleet to the Far East was to foreclose any chance that the Empire-Commonwealth would look to another nation for protection. For this would have meant the negation of the basic premise of the Empire - the ability of Great Britain to protect it.

Significantly, the instructions from Churchill, which the British Delegates had in their briefcases, marked the end of British domination of Allied strategy. By giving way to the Americans in the Pacific, Churchill was in effect giving away overall strategic planning of the war. For it was impossible to give the Americans control of one area which they themselves saw as secondary, and retain for the British over-all direction in the major theatre. The Americans real-



ized this and had drawn up their instructions accordingly. The British delegates, en route to the United States on the King George V<sup>63</sup> were soon to find it out.

The British/United States Staff Conversations (known as the A.B.C.-1) which on January 7, 1941 opened in Washington, signalled the start of what Churchill was to term the Grand Alliance. They lasted from January 29 to March 29, 1941. Both delegations knew that any conclusions would have to be approved by their respective governments, and would not imply any political commitment by either side. Nevertheless, they were free to discuss the whole range of global strategy. There was much common ground; but the issue of Singapore remained an outstanding point of divergence in strategic thinking.

The British presented their list of strategic objectives:

The European theatre is the vital theatre where a decision must first be sought.

The general policy should therefore be to defeat Germany and Italy first, and then deal with Japan.

The security of the Far Eastern position, including Australia and New Zealand, is essential to the cohesion of the British Commonwealth and to the maintenance of its war effort. Singapore is the key to the defence of these interests and its retention must be assured.<sup>64</sup>

With the first two of these objectives, the Americans were in accord; with the third, they were not.

The British proposed that American naval forces, rather than making provision for the defence of the Western Hemisphere, should make their main effort in the Atlantic and European theatres. American naval units in the Pacific should be employed to ensure that Japanese efforts did not





prejudice the main effort of the United States and British Commonwealth in the European theatre of war. To the Americans, this seemed, when taken in conjunction with previous British statements, that the United States should underwrite the defence of Singapore.<sup>65</sup>

The British outlined the history of the Singapore Base, and the reasons for its development.<sup>66</sup> The necessity for the base lay not only in strategic considerations, but economic and political ones - particularly in the retention of the cohesion of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Thus, just as American strategy had to take into account American public opinion, British strategic planning had to pay heed to the public opinion in the Pacific Dominions, particularly as specific undertakings had been made to defend them. Equally important was the vital necessity for Britain to keep open the sea-routes in the Pacific for the importation of food and raw materials, without which the United Kingdom could not survive. The defence of all these interests, the British delegates stated, rested on British capability to hold Singapore and ultimately to station a battle fleet there capable of meeting Japanese aggression.

Even if the Americans withheld their aid, the British would sacrifice the Mediterranean and send a fleet to the Far East. But ,

The results of United States intervention upon our traditional strategic policy in the Far East are of great importance - not the least among them being the implication that we might still hope to maintain the cohesion and war effort of the British Commonwealth without abandoning our position in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, we still feel that the issues at stake are so fundamental that the loss of Singapore would be a disaster of the first magnitude, second only to the loss of the British Isles.



They also stressed the far reaching political results of a Japanese victory: undisputed mastery of East Asia, of the East Indies and of the Western Pacific. Not only would the United States and Britain lose access to vital raw materials, with Japan becoming self sustaining and thus free from American economic pressure; but among the peoples of the East,

Our morale and prestige would suffer a resounding blow, and those of the Axis Powers and Japan would be correspondingly enhanced, with almost incalculable consequences, both during and after the war.

Singapore had ceased to be just a base. It was a bastion of Empire, the symbol of British might, prestige and ability to rule and protect the Empire. For these reasons, it had to be held - not because it would mean the end of Britain in Europe, but because it would mean the end of Britain in Asia, and thus the end of Imperial Britain. What the British wanted the Americans to do by deployment of the U.S.N., was to underwrite that Empire by engaging in forward active operations against the Japanese. The British already realized that it would not be necessary to hold Singapore in order to protect Australia and New Zealand, but they were careful not to make this point in Washington.

They did, however, make it very clear that the loss of Singapore would weaken the hand of those in Australia, New Zealand, India and even China who advocated close co-operation with Great Britain.

They pointed out that, aside from the political necessity of holding on to Singapore, the base provided a means of re-entry into the South China Sea.<sup>67</sup> If the Allies still held the base, they could reassert their position there. They





concluded:<sup>68</sup>

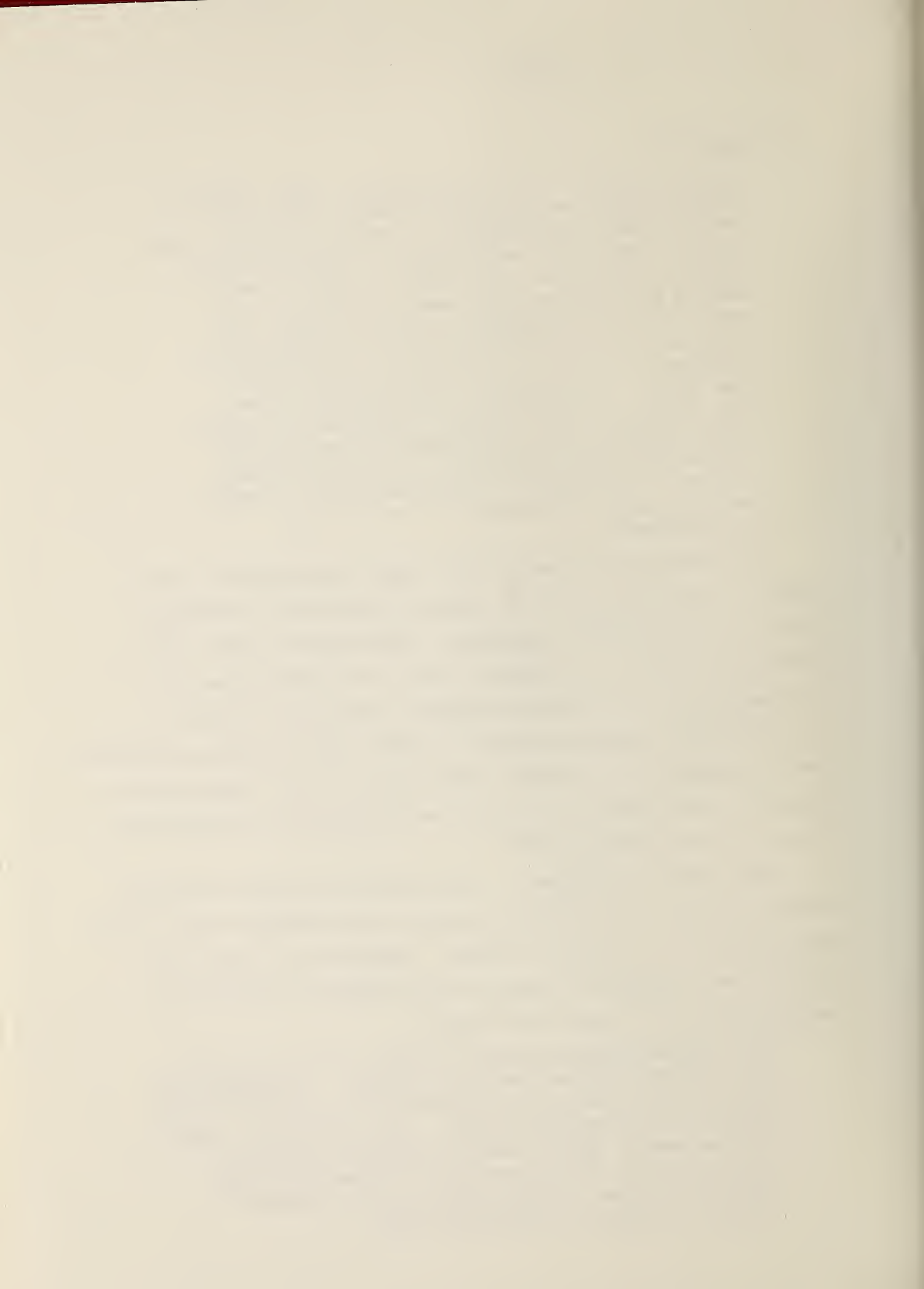
Even if we were able to eliminate Italy and the Italian Fleet as an active enemy; even with United States assistance, if the situation in the Atlantic and home waters were to undergo some drastic change for the better, such as would enable us to reduce our naval strength in the west - even if Germany as well as Italy were defeated, it is at least highly problematical whether we could ever restore the position in the East. To carry out a successful attack and gain a foothold against opposition in East Asia and the Indies, thousands of miles from our nearest base, would be a colossal undertaking. It is open to doubt whether it would be a practical operation of war in any circumstance.

The American planners had always unanimously agreed that to accept the British proposal would be a strategic error of incalculable magnitude, and they had told their Chiefs of Staff so. Admiral Turner, who had prepared a statement on the British proposal, traced the history of this British suggestion back to 1938, when President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull had "more or less committed the United States Fleet to actions in conjunction with British Forces in the Far East".<sup>69</sup>

The American planners, now fearful that the President might accede to the British request, were anxious that he be made aware of the Service Chiefs' objections, objections which they repeated in reply to the British delegation's appreciation.<sup>70</sup> They agreed that,

The general morale effect of the loss of Singapore and the Philippines would be severe. Singapore has been built up in public opinion as a symbol of the power of the British Empire. Its value as a symbol has become so great that its capture would be a serious blow. But many severe blows have been taken and other severe blows can be absorbed without leading to final disaster.





To the Americans, the important theatre was the Atlantic, and nothing should be undertaken to divert strength from that area of conflict. This was the common basis of Anglo-American strategy, and it was up to the British to take care of their own interests as best they could. The Americans refused to recognize that the retention of Singapore and the security of the Far Eastern possessions were vital as immediate allied aims or objectives, and in this context they advised against the sending of American naval units to the base.<sup>71</sup> For the United States to help hold Singapore would mean that the Americans would undertake the early defeat of Japan, and that the United States would accept the responsibility for the defence of a large part of the British Empire. This the United States was not willing to do.

Although the Americans did not mention it at the Conference, they had other good reasons why they were loath to place any of their ships at Singapore. They felt that the facilities were not sufficient or of the right type to repair or maintain American warships, and also that the base was vulnerable to air attack.<sup>72</sup> These American doubts were reinforced when in February 1941 they asked the British why the aircraft carrier Illustrious, and the battleships Barham and Warspite, all of the Mediterranean fleet, had been sent to the United States for war-damage repairs when it was a shorter distance to have sent them to Singapore. The British then admitted that they had neither the personnel, spares or machines to do the repairs at Singapore.<sup>73</sup> The Americans had possibly also read a report in the London Times, which referred to the flimsy workshops and lack of facilities for ship-repair at the base.<sup>74</sup>

The Americans, accordingly, were not going to defend British interests in the Far East. This was a bitter blow to



the British. They had hoped for active American participation, for only by a forward American naval policy could they escape sending naval forces from the Mediterranean to the Far East when Japan entered the war, an operation which would be a "wasteful distribution of force in the Pacific at the expense of the more immediate European theatre".<sup>75</sup>

If necessity demanded, the British would send a fleet of six capital ships to the Far East if the U.S.N. was established at Hawaii, or nine if it was not.<sup>76</sup> In order to send this fleet, British units in the Atlantic and Mediterranean would have to be replaced by American ships: a plan which the Americans were willing to support.

The results of the Washington Conference on Far Eastern strategy were best summed up by the report submitted by the British Delegation to the C.O.S.<sup>77</sup>

The most important point on which we failed to convince the U.S. Staff Committee was the fundamental importance of the retention of Singapore not only to the British Commonwealth, but to the joint effort of the Associated Powers in the prosecution of war against Germany. The U.S. Chiefs of Staff do not subscribe to this view and are firmly opposed to any further reinforcement of their own Asiatic Fleet from the Pacific Fleet. In accordance with our instructions, we deferred to the U.S. decision regarding the distribution of naval strength in the Pacific, but we adhered firmly to the view of His Majesty's Government on the importance of the Far East position. It has, therefore, been agreed that in the event of war with Japan, the necessary naval reinforcements for the Far East should be found by us, in which event we shall be able to take account of U.S. reinforcements in the Atlantic.

Although the British delegates argued the Singapore issue, they did it from a position of weakness. They had





been informed by Churchill before they went to Washington that the American plan for the Pacific must prevail.

In fact the American plan was not wholly to the disadvantage of the British. Germany was the chief enemy and Europe the main theatre of operation. The real argument, current in London, but not publicised to the Americans at Washington, was the relative importance of the Middle East and the Far East. The Far East was seen in the long term as the more vital area.<sup>78</sup>

On May 15, 1941, the Defence Committee in London approved the A.B.C.-1 report. In Washington, the American Planners accepted it as the basis for future planning, calling it Rainbow 5. The American plan was that if Japan entered the war, the strategic policy would be defensive. There were to be no naval reinforcements for the Philippines, for the defence of which the Asiatic Fleet would be primarily concerned. Thereafter, that fleet would help defend the Malay Barrier.

The plan to establish British military representatives in Washington, to be known as the Joint Staff Mission, was instituted. For the sake of "cover", it was publicly called the "Advisors to the British Supply Council in North America". The British members of the Mission were: Admiral Sir Charles Little, former Second Sea Lord; Lieutenant-General H.C.B. Wemyss, former Adjutant-General; and Air Marshal Arthur Harris, formerly Deputy Chief of the Air Staff. This mission was the forerunner to the Joint Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff, which became operational when the United States entered the war.<sup>79</sup>

Of greater importance was the decision of President Roosevelt on April 11 to extend the patrol areas of the United



States Navy to cover all North Atlantic waters up to 25° West. This extended American naval patrols to the Azores. This action flowed from the A.B.C. talks, as it had been agreed that American naval forces would relieve British ships in the Atlantic so they could be deployed in other theatres.<sup>80</sup> However, the ships so replaced did not proceed to the Far East, but to the Mediterranean.

The President's decision coupled with the passage of the Lend-Lease Act on March 11, gave welcome succor to the British, who were about to experience another series of disasters, particularly at sea. During the first months of 1941 the Battle of the Atlantic swung against Britain. It will be recalled that in late 1940, the C.O.S. and the First Lord had asked the Cabinet to agree to the long-term naval construction programme as soon as possible. The Cabinet had accepted that the ships should be built providing that labour and materials were available. But this decision never materialized due to the insatiable demands of the convoy battle. Later, on March 26, 1941, the Prime Minister established the policy that no naval ships were to be built that could not be completed in 1942.<sup>81</sup>

The following day, the First Lord told the Cabinet<sup>82</sup> about the curtailment of the heavy ship-building programme. He was concerned that there had been only one aircraft carrier undertaken in 1940, and this had been stopped due to the necessity of building small escort ships. He wanted Cabinet approval for another aircraft carrier later in the year, and also a complete review of the whole heavy ship programme. The Cabinet<sup>83</sup> gave its approval the following month to the construction of additional cruisers of the Fiji Class, and to the expansion of the Fleet Air Arm. But





although agreeing that heavy ships were necessary, the Cabinet insisted that the units of production, labour and material, along with the more immediate demands, precluded the initiation of the 1940 programme.<sup>84</sup>

So, as in 1940, the heavy ships required for a balanced fleet were not built. The decision to forego the construction programme naturally formed part of the British desire to get the U.S.N. to take over responsibility in the Pacific.

While the A.B.C. talks were in progress, disconcerting news had been reaching London that the Japanese were starting to move south. Further information arrived about Japanese encroachment on French Indo-China during the mediation over Sino-French dispute about the territory in the area between the two countries.<sup>85</sup>

As the Japanese moves became more ominous, the Joint Planners reviewed the Far Eastern situation.<sup>86</sup> They stated that a Japanese seizure of Indo-China would offset any American aid to the British in the Far East. But they also believed that a display of force by the United States, such as sending naval ships to Singapore, or failing that to Manila, would convince Japan that war against Great Britain would mean war against the United States as well. They recommended that the Government adopt a strong line with Japan. "The stronger line we take", they noted, "the more likely are the Japanese to believe that the United States are behind us".<sup>87</sup> However, a strong American line had to be backed up by an equally strong American fleet moving into Japanese waters to support the British at Singapore. Soon after the Cabinet was informed by Eden on February 6, 1941, that the Japanese Embassy Staff had just been told to be ready to leave London at short notice.<sup>88</sup>





This growing tension in the Far East had also been observed in Canberra. On the morning of February 13, the British received a cable from the Australians asking for a firm statement regarding just what naval reinforcements would be sent to the Far East in the event of war with Japan. The Australians also expressed their reservations about the British plan which had been outlined at the Singapore Conference of October 1940, to send only one battle cruiser and one carrier to the Indian Ocean. To Canberra, this left a lot to be desired.<sup>89</sup>

The First Sea Lord, Pound, having read the Australian cable, minuted Churchill. He agreed with the Australians that the small force the British planned to send to the Far East could not prevent the Japanese from attacking Singapore or breaking into the Indian Ocean with heavy-gunned raiders. For the plan to work, the U.S. Fleet had to strike west of Hawaii to draw off Japanese forces.<sup>90</sup> But the Americans had already said no to this strategy. The following day, February 14, Pound's note to the Prime Minister was discussed by the C.O.S.<sup>91</sup> They supported Pound: the only way the Japanese could be stopped was by the U.S.N. operating in Japanese waters.

This ominous information<sup>92</sup> led the C.O.S. to cable Admiral Bellairs in Washington to try as best he could during the A.B.C. conversations to get the Americans more active in the Far East.<sup>93</sup> The cables to Bellairs were supported by one addressed to the President from Churchill. He told Roosevelt that while he considered the present Japanese attitude as a bluster to cover an advance into Indo-China, nevertheless,

I ought to let you know that the weight of the Japanese Navy, if thrown against us, would confront us with a situation beyond the scope of our naval resources. <sup>94</sup>



The threat of raiders attacking British convoys was, in Churchill's mind, the biggest worry. But to reinforce the Far East with warships would be to court disaster elsewhere. Should the Pacific Dominions be directly threatened, ships would be sent, but the consequences would spell doom in the Middle East.

Pound's minute to Churchill, and Churchill's cable to the President questioned the viability of the plan to send one carrier and one battle cruiser to the Indian Ocean to counter Japanese raiders. The only way that this plan could work was for the American Fleet at Hawaii to move west, forcing the Japanese away from the Indian Ocean.<sup>95</sup> This was a relatively new twist. Formerly it was assumed that Japanese fear of the American Fleet based on Hawaii would have been sufficient to deter them from moving large forces into the Indian Ocean. The Admiralty was against sending a small capital ship force into the Indian Ocean while the American Fleet remained at Hawaii.<sup>96</sup> This marked the beginning of the serious differences that were to emerge in the later months of 1941 between Pound and Churchill, concerning the type and size of a Far Eastern fleet, and the base from which it should operate. The Far Eastern situation now appeared to ease. Possibly due to British successes in the Western desert, and some hesitation by Japan about pressing the situation too far too fast, the Japanese appeared to back off; and by February 23 and 24, the War Cabinet believed that, at least for the moment, the Far East had become quiet.<sup>97</sup> However, the events of February had demonstrated just how fast a Far Eastern crisis could blow up, and just how badly-situated the British were to resist any Japanese move without American naval support. As the A.B.C. talks made plain, however, United States naval





reinforcements would not be forthcoming.

Shortly after Churchill's cable to the President, the Australian C.O.S. sent their appreciation of the Far Eastern situation to their Ambassador in Washington to be passed on to the British delegation attending the A.B.C. talks.<sup>98</sup>

The Australians were concerned about naval defence in the Tasman Sea, which if it came under Japanese control, would sever sea-communications with the other theatres of war. They also noted the importance of the route from Honolulu to Australia. Finally, they pointed out that the security of the South-Western Pacific was vital for the passage of the American Fleet and of American aid to Australia

This Australian appreciation was examined by the British Joint Planners.<sup>99</sup> They agreed with the Australians that the East Indies would be Japan's initial objective, along with Singapore; this ruled out any immediate attack on the Dominion. "It was," the Joint Planners wrote, "a welcome advance towards our own point of view." But, they took strong exception to the emphasis on local defence in the Australian appreciation, and they reported that both Pacific Dominions "have evinced a tendency to take a parochial view of the defence of sea-communications in practice and to stretch local defence beyond its generally accepted meaning".

The C.O.S. therefore informed Australia that the naval forces to be sent to the Far East could not be increased beyond one battle cruiser and aircraft carrier, plus Australian and New Zealand naval units which would return from other theatres.<sup>100</sup> However, the moment Japan entered the war,

The situation would be carefully watched and an immediate redistribution of forces will be made should the threat to our communications in the Pacific and Indian Ocean be relatively greater than that in the Atlantic.



They also pointed out that while the U.S.N. would not move west of Hawaii, certain American naval units would relieve British forces in the Atlantic, allowing the Admiralty to dispatch certain forces including capital ships to the Far East. But this could only take place if the Americans entered the war, and so far there was little indication that they would do so.

Though the United States Government was preparing for war, it was not yet politically in a position to enter into a firm alliance with the British. It was possible, however, for the British Far Eastern Commanders to draw up firm agreements with Australia and New Zealand, and also with the Netherlands East Indies. At the suggestion of Australia, another conference was held at Singapore to draw up plans for naval co-operation in the Far East. A fully representative delegation from the Netherlands East Indies attended, but the Americans were present only in the capacity of observers.<sup>101</sup> New Zealand was represented by the Australian delegation.<sup>102</sup>

The conversations resulted in what became known as the A.D.A. (Anglo-Dutch-Australian) agreement.<sup>103</sup> It was subject to ratification by the respective governments and involved no political commitment. It was agreed that a Japanese attack on any one of the participants was of vital importance to the others, and all should co-operate fully in such an event. The active participation of the United States in the early stages of the conflict, however, could not be relied upon. Agreement was reached on what actions by Japan would necessitate the respective C-in-C's to advise their Governments to authorize military counter-measures.

The principle of mutual reinforcement was agreed upon, and





the importance of Singapore to the security of the Netherlands East Indies was emphasized. The Japanese should be met as far north as possible of the line of Dutch possessions. The threat to sea-communications and the best method to counter it were considered, and naval forces expected to be available were evaluated.

In the Indian Ocean, the British would provide one aircraft carrier, one 8-inch cruiser, seven 6-inch cruisers and five armed merchant-cruisers. The majority of these ships would come from the China and East Indies squadrons. In addition, one battle cruiser and one aircraft carrier plus one cruiser would be sent from Force H at Gibraltar. Should the raider situation in the Atlantic ease, an additional force of one 8-inch, and one 7.5-inch cruiser and one aircraft carrier would be made available. Also available were three D-class cruisers based on Penang.\*

The Dutch would provide three light cruisers, six destroyers, eleven submarines, and eleven flights of aircraft, as agreed at the Anglo-Dutch conversations in November 1940.

The conference also outlined what would be considered a direct act of war. This was defined by an attack on any of the territories or possessions of the contracting powers, the movement of Japanese forces into any part of Thailand to the west of 100° east, or to the south of 10° north, or the movement of an escorted Japanese convoy which was clearly directed to the East Coast of Malaya or had crossed the parallel 6° north between Malaya and the Philippines.

---

\* D-Class cruisers. Completed 1918-1919; 4,850 tons, 6 x 6 inch guns; speed, 29 kts.





The Chiefs of Staff in London approved the military clauses of the A.D.A. agreement, but not the prior definition of an act of war by the Japanese, which would call for automatic reaction from the commanders on the spot without reference to London. In addition, the C.O.S. could not recommend that the Dutch should be given an assurance of full British assistance, if the Japanese attacked the East Indies. Arrangements were made to reassemble the Conference, but only on the condition that the agenda was confined to military questions within the scope of accepted policy.<sup>104</sup> The British clearly thought that in any case, such planning was better done in London.

Prior to the A.D.A. Conference, Australia's Prime Minister Robert Menzies had left for London in January to talk about the defence of the Far East. During the time he was travelling to London, his government received a cable from the Dominions Office which contained a summary of conversations between Lord Halifax and President Roosevelt.<sup>105</sup> The President had repeated what his Military Staff had told the British during the A.B.C. talks - that the United States would not fight an active war in the Pacific, as it would mean a diversion from the main theatre of operations, which was the Atlantic and Europe. More chilling was the President's view that he was doubtful if he could commit his country to war if the Japanese attacked only British and Dutch possessions.

While Menzies was on his way to London, the British Joint Planners, now in receipt of the reports of the various conferences, prepared an aide memoire for him.<sup>106</sup>

They repeated that the defence of Singapore remained a vital British objective. In reference to American support, the obvious was noted: that with the active intervention of the United States, Britain could face a "war in the Far



East with confidence". The Planners concluded by noting that the defence requirements

stated by the commanders and subsequently endorsed at the Defence Conference, to be excessive. The general quality of the Japanese air forces had been over-estimated and the value of ship-borne aircraft exaggerated. Our contention is borne out by our experience at home, in Malta and in North Africa, where we started the present successful campaign with an inferiority of three to one. We have no reason to suppose that the Japanese will be any more effective than the Italians.

This blissful underestimation of the efficiency of the Japanese air power was something that clouded British thinking all during the period before the Japanese attacked and demonstrated just how very efficient they were. But regardless of how the British rated Japanese capabilities, it is fair to ask, after the campaigns in Norway and the Battle of France, how the British could ignore the possible impact of Japanese air power if a war broke out. Two months later, in Greece and Crete, the British were to be again brutally reminded of the decisive effect air power could have on the land and sea battle.

Menzies was in London for two months. He attended meetings of the War Cabinet, held discussions with the C.O.S. and the service departments, and generally became conversant with the course of the war, which was now going very badly. The Greek campaign was a disaster, Crete fell and the German Afrika Corps pushed the British back to their desert start line. All the while, Menzies kept pressing the British for some firm commitment in respect to the Far East. At the Admiralty,<sup>107</sup> he raised the old problem, what size fleet would be sent to the Far East? In reply, Pound reiterated





that an aircraft carrier would be sent with a possible additional one, Eagle. On the question of American support in the Atlantic, Menzies said that it might well take two to three months before the disposition was made, and what if the Americans remained neutral? Pound answered by stating that "apart from anything we might take from the Mediterranean, our policy would be to scrape up everything we could send to the Far East, leaving the minimum strength for security in home waters". If the King George V, Prince of Wales and Hood were available, the Admiralty would send Nelson and Rodney at the same time as Renown and Ark Royal left ~~Port H~~ at Gibraltar. If the Admiralty could not muster up a fleet of nine capital ships, a smaller fleet would move to Ceylon and see which way Japan attacked. If the Japanese moved west to Singapore, then the Navy would fight its way in. If the United States entered the war and acted boldly by launching carrier attacks on the "wooden Japanese cities", then Japan would hesitate to move south. The Admiralty hoped that the United States would move three capital ships to the Atlantic in order that the Admiralty could send three R Class ships to the Far East. "The difficult question", Pound explained, "of how much could be removed from the Mediterranean, had a large political aspect." What Pound did not tell Menzies was that as First Sea Lord, he was adamantly against the dispatch of any major portion of the British Fleet to Singapore. Nor, as he had made clear to Churchill several times, was he in favour of sending a small capital ship force to the Indian Ocean or to Singapore if the American Fleet remained at Hawaii. Further, during the whole time that Menzies was in London, he was not made aware of the American opposition to any British suggestion that the U.S.N. reinforce its Asiatic Fleet or support the British in the seas around Singapore. Menzies, having heard all this



confined himself to Australia House, where he composed his own memorandum on the Far East.

Dated March 29, a scant eight days before the Germans unleashed their Balkan campaign, this expressed the views of the Australian Government.<sup>108</sup> After rehearsing Australian views to the importance of Singapore, Menzies turned to the naval dispositions proposed to meet a Japanese attack. The additional carrier might not materialize, as long as German raiders were operating in the South Atlantic. Referring to the A.B.C. report, Menzies wrote that if the United States entered the war, they would supply certain ships for the Atlantic, allowing the British to send a fleet to the Far East consisting of two Nelsons, three R Class battleships, ten cruisers, plus 27 destroyers and ten submarines. But, as he pointed out, after all this naval shuffling took place, it could take at least 58 days for the fleet to reach Singapore. To Menzies, 58 days was too long.

He then referred to a cable received from Churchill on December 23, 1940. This cable was just one more repetition of promises made by successive British governments since 1937. The only embellishment to the pre-war promises was the commitment to abandon the Mediterranean in order to send a fleet to save Australia should she be seriously threatened. In addition, Churchill was optimistic that Italy could be so reduced in naval strength that a British fleet could be sent east; and more important, he was convinced that if Japan entered the war, the United States would be on Britain's side.<sup>109</sup>

As Menzies pointed out, however, there was a need to "resolve a general declaration of this nature into a plan of specific measures that really would be possible in the event





of such a contingency arising". For example, there were large land forces, including three Australian Divisions, in the Middle East, and they could not simply be left to their fate once the Navy left for the Far East. To evacuate them would require shipping and time, convoys organized and naval protection provided; and "much could happen in the Far East during this period".

In addition, there was the political factor within the Dominion, whose willingness to supply armed forces for the Middle East was entirely dependent on the sense of local security in the public mind, and this sense of security was now uncertain.

Menzies' memorandum was reviewed by the Joint Planners,<sup>110</sup> who simply repeated that the availability of a capital ship force for the Far East, if Australia was threatened, "would require the most careful consideration, as it would leave our naval forces generally weakened in all theatres of war".

The Menzies Memorandum, along with the Joint Planners review, which suggested that the promise to rush to the aid of Australia was not a hard-and-fast commitment, was discussed by the Defence Committee Operations\* on April 9.<sup>111</sup> During the meeting, Churchill maintained his usual position that there was not likely to be a war with Japan. Pound displayed his

---

\* The Defence Committee Operations was the Military Co-ordination Committee renamed; and worked in two sections, one which dealt with operations, the other with supply. The P.M. as Minister of Defence, chaired both Committees. The Operations Committee consisted of the C.O.S., the three service Ministers, the Foreign Secretary, the Deputy P.M. (Attlee) and the Minister of Aircraft Production, Lord Beaverbrook.





usual reluctance to send any part of the fleet to the Far East and was unwilling to state definitely just when the fleet might move east should Japan go to war. Churchill thought that "it was the height of folly to lay down in advance rigid dispositions which we should take up if Japan entered the war". It was all right "to repeat the general promise already given", but, he continued, "that did not mean we would give up our great interests in the Middle East on account of a few raids by Japanese cruisers"; and if Japan entered the war, America would come in.

The Committee did agree, against Churchill's opposition, to allow Australia three squadrons of aircraft, for Menzies was getting little else. But there was no dissent that the Dutch were not to be given any guarantee if Japan attacked, unless the United States would endorse it.

Two days later, Menzies received the approved C.O.S. reply to his memorandum.<sup>112</sup> This told him that the Buffalo Fighter aircraft\*, which were allocated for Malaya, were equal to the task of providing air cover. The C.O.S. repeated their curious assumption that most Japanese aircraft were obsolete, and "as we have said, we have no reason to believe that Japanese standards are even comparable with those of the Italians". Once again, they reiterated that if Japan

---

\* Brewster Buffalo: speed 315 m.p.h. at 13,500 ft. Climb 2,070 ft./min. Range 650 miles. Service ceiling 30,500 ft. The Buffalo was no match for the Japanese Zero, which outclimbed it by 500 ft./min. and had a top speed almost 100 m.p.h. faster.



attacked, the United States would probably enter the war, making any Japanese attack on Australia unlikely. Finally, any hopes that the Australians had of a British fleet proceeding to the Far East was ruled out. The demands of war in other theatres precluded sending anything but the one carrier and battlecruiser promised to the Indian Ocean.

Less than two weeks later, British fortunes in the Middle East and the Balkans took a dramatic turn for the worse.\* The deteriorating situation led the Australian Government to cable Menzies, demanding that he extract from the British "a candid and outspoken appreciation setting out the assistance on which they could definitely rely in certain circumstances".<sup>113</sup> The circumstances the Australians envisaged was that the Mediterranean might become untenable for the Royal Navy. In the event of the fleet having to fight its way out of that Sea, the Australians felt that the Japanese would attack Singapore. Canberra made it clear that they wanted the information immediately, not after the "position had stabilized".

When Menzies repeated his Government's demands to the C.O.S., they instructed the Joint Planners to prepare a reply, which was given to the C.O.S. on April 28.<sup>114</sup> The Joint Planners<sup>115</sup> did not accept the contingencies outlined by the Australians as possibilities. Nor could they answer hypothetical questions such as those posed by Menzies. Recognizing that the whole basis of planning is to consider hypothetical

---

\* British naval losses were three cruisers sunk (Gloucester, Fiji, Calcutta) and six destroyers. Severely damaged were the battleships Barham and Warspite, aircraft carrier Formidable, six cruisers and seven destroyers.





questions, this comment by the Joint Planners was a polite way of skirting the problem.

Having disposed of the more embarrassing aspects of the Australian cable to Menzies, the planners added that if the worst occurred, the British would hold on to Iraq and the Sudan, and deny Germany the Middle East oil; and, if the Mediterranean was lost, the Royal Navy would be free to move elsewhere - presumably the Far East. They did not accept the Australian view that the United States would not enter the war. They repeated that the Americans were so closely identified with the British cause, that the mere presence of their fleet at Hawaii imposed a powerful restraint on Japanese freedom to move southward.

It was still the British intention to send a carrier and battlecruiser to the Indian Ocean, and certain "other heavy ships would be available, but their dispatch to the Far East can only be considered in the light of the situation at the time". The factors involved would be "the strength and concentration of the German Fleet, the success of the attended land and sea operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the British capital ship strength".

The following day, amidst reports of the desperate position of British Forces in Greece, who were being lifted off by the already over-stretched Mediterranean fleet, Menzies met the Defence Committee to discuss a summary of the Joint Planners Report.<sup>116</sup> The meeting was a strained one. Churchill repeated that should Japan attack, the United States would enter the war. In that case, Australia would have little to fear. Menzies, aware of the situation, did not press for a written summary of British strategic plans in the case of a certain eventuality, but he left the meeting not altogether satisfied.



Menzies was returning to Canberra without having obtained any firm commitments. Very shortly, he was going to get a sharp lesson on just how "important" the British regarded "consultation with the Dominions" on issues affecting their security.

It will be recalled that during the eleventh meeting of the British-American Staff Conversations in Washington,<sup>117</sup> the American planners had agreed to transfer some of their fleet from the Pacific to the Atlantic, in order to allow the British to move their ships from the Atlantic to form part of a Far Eastern Fleet. Though that commitment was hedged with political constraints and dependent on Japan's attitude at the time, it formed the basis of British estimates on what could be spared for the Eastern Theatre.

Three weeks prior before Menzies met the Defence Committee in London, Roosevelt authorized the movement of three American battleships from the Pacific into the Atlantic. This authorization had subsequently been cancelled, but on April 21, the American mission in London received a cable from Washington:

present grave threat to sea communications of the United Kingdom may require a much stronger reinforcement of the United States Atlantic Fleet by forces drawn from the Pacific than is contemplated by the report (A.B.C.-1).

In such circumstances, offensive action by the United States Pacific Fleet, other than in connection with enemy trade, would necessarily be less influential.<sup>118</sup>

Not long after, Roosevelt was being pressed by his advisers to move the main part of the Pacific Fleet into the Atlantic.<sup>119</sup>

On April 29,<sup>120</sup> Halifax informed London that there was a sharp division amongst the Americans concerning this transfer





of ships. The U.S. Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, believed that if Japan saw the U.S.N. actively operating the Atlantic, she would think that the U.S. was on the verge of coming into the war and would refrain from any action.

He also reported that Rear-Admiral Danckwerts, with his American counterpart, Admiral Turner, were against such a drastic depletion of United States naval forces in the Pacific. Danckwerts believed that the U.S.N. ships would have to be replaced by an equivalent number of British forces, or Japan might seize the chance to move south. Moreover, there would be a need for six British capital ships at Singapore and six American at Hawaii, or nine at Singapore. But no British capital ships could be sent unless the Americans took over the Mediterranean, which would bring the United States into the war. Thus to reduce the Pacific Fleet below nine capital ships, unless the Americans were in the war, was unsound. Danckwerts believed that it would take two months to replace Royal Navy ships, now on active stations, and this would give the Japanese time to carry out operations in the Pacific.

When the Halifax telegram was discussed by the Defence Committee on April 30,<sup>121</sup> Churchill said he "was horrified to read in the telegram that Admiral Danckwerts had poured cold water" on the American plan to transfer their ships. The Committee agreed to tell Halifax that they welcomed the American plan so long as the naval forces left at Pearl Harbor were strong enough to deter Japan, and included aircraft carriers. But before the Committee's decision could be conveyed to Halifax, Menzies demanded that he be consulted before any final decision was taken. Somewhat surprised at Menzies'





strong reaction, the Defence Committee was hastily reconvened the following day.<sup>122</sup> Menzies stressed that the Dominions must be consulted concerning any changes of policy that would affect their security. It was not a pleasant meeting, and saw Churchill trying to pacify an irate Menzies by claiming that the movement of American ships would not leave "Australia in the lurch". Menzies still refused to commit his government, and adhered to his position that Canberra must be consulted. Faced with the intransigent Australian, the Committee agreed to cable Halifax to wait until the Dominions had been consulted before he informed the Americans of British acquiescence to the plan to shift U.S.N. units to the Atlantic. But, by May 7, the Dominions had agreed to the move. The following day Halifax was told that London agreed to the American redeployment of their Pacific Fleet.<sup>123</sup>

The cable added the proviso that the American fleet remaining at Hawaii be not less than six capital ships and two aircraft carriers. The inclusion of the latter was thought highly important. This demand for a balanced fleet to be left in the Pacific, according to Butler<sup>124</sup>, was done at the insistence of the Dominions. In part this is true, but Pound had also pressed the Committee on the same point.

The British welcomed the American move, not on strategic grounds, since the American ships could not take an active part in the battle, but on psychological and political grounds: as a demonstration to the Axis powers, including Japan, that the United States was committed to the British cause. The thinking was that Japan, noting the American transfer of ships, would believe that the United States was going to enter the war on the allied side. Thus Tokyo might be restrained



from coming into the conflict.

In London, however, there were some officials who had misgivings about this transfer of American ships. Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Undersecretary at the Foreign Office, felt it was a "hare-brained scheme", and complained that Churchill, who had been convinced in 1940 that the Japanese would enter the war, was now "determined that nothing will make them come in".<sup>125</sup>

Once again, on May 19, the Defence Committee met to discuss the misgivings about the transfer of the American ships.<sup>126</sup>

Again Pound pointed out that regardless of how many American heavy units were in the Atlantic, there could be no relief for the British capital ship escorts until the Americans were in the war. The one good factor was that the American move would speed up the dispatch of a fleet to the Far East should Japan enter the war and the Americans came into the conflict. Attlee said that if the Americans did not fight Japan, then whatever American Fleet was left at Hawaii would offer no protection to the Dominions. If they did come in, then they could move their fleet back into the Pacific. To Attlee, the move into the Atlantic increased the likelihood of the U.S. entering the war and would influence wavering nations in Europe. The general conclusion was that the American move was welcome. But this did not answer the question, would Japan strike if the American Navy was reduced in the Pacific?

Three battleships and one carrier from the Pacific Fleet moved into the Atlantic in June, leaving nine capital ships and three carriers at Pearl Harbor.<sup>127</sup>

As has been consistently pointed out, the American Fleet





in the Pacific was a vital element in British Far Eastern strategy. It is therefore opportune to summarize the condition of that Fleet and its planned strategic deployment in the case of a war in the Pacific.

After the transfer to the Atlantic, the main strength of the Pacific Fleet (so named on February 1, 1941, when Admiral H.E. Kimmel took over command) consisted of:

- 9 battleships
- 3 aircraft carriers
- 9 heavy cruisers
- 10 6" cruisers (5 old)
- 45 destroyers (plus 6 old destroyers)
- 33 submarines
- 76 flying boats

This Fleet was outnumbered two to one by the Japanese Combined Fleet in all categories of ships except battleships. One American post-war analyst<sup>128</sup> has called it "an inferior fleet, under enemy surveillance in an exposed naval base". British Military Commanders in the Far East however, and the C.O.S. in London, had based their calculations on the deterrent effect of such a fleet. The deterrent would prevent the Japanese from allocating more than a limited number of warships for escort duties, thus imposing a constraint on the number of convoys they could send into the South China Sea. In addition, it would prevent the Japanese from dispatching an expedition around the east side of the Philippines towards the Dutch East Indies.<sup>129</sup>

According to the A.B.C.-1 agreement, the Pacific Fleet would support British naval forces south of the Equator between 155° East and 180° East as opportunity offered, or as might prove strategically sound. But the Americans would not undertake to give continuous support, nor would such support be extended to cover against sporadic raiding by single Axis ships.<sup>130</sup>



The role of the United States Asiatic Fleet, stationed at Manila, was to operate against Japanese convoys moving towards the Philippines and Hong Kong. This fleet consisted of one 8-inch cruiser, one 6-inch cruiser, thirteen old destroyers, 17 submarines, and 24 patrol seaplanes. The war plan known as Rainbow 5, which was based on the A.B.C. report and officially adopted in May 1941,<sup>131</sup> gave the Asiatic Fleet the task of supporting the U.S. Army in the defence of the Philippines. If and when the Islands fell, or at the discretion of the Naval Commander, the fleet could be shifted to a British or Dutch port. In this case, it would come under British control, and be used to support the British and Dutch Navies' defence of the Malay Barrier.<sup>132</sup> It was agreed that once Japanese moves became threatening, the base support elements would move from Manila to Singapore, while the cruisers with attached units would, when ordered by the C-in-C Asiatic Fleet, move to Singapore, coming under the command of the British C-in-C China, and operating under his strategic direction. Once Corregidor and Manila Bay became untenable, all remaining naval and air forces would move southwards for employment under the strategic direction of the C-in-C China.

These plans now needed revision. The Japanese were making ready for war.

The period from the fall of France to the beginning of the Grand Alliance, shows how much the principle of Commonwealth consultation was a facade. With the United Kingdom fighting for its very survival, the defence of the Far East receded into the background of British strategic priorities. The Middle East became the second priority of strategic importance, while the Eastern Empire, including Singapore, was



relegated to a backwater - a problem that would resolve itself when the time came. For the Pacific Dominions, it was a time of frustration as they tried to solicit from London some recognition that they had to be consulted, and that the defences of the Pacific, although not yet a theatre of war, must be put in order. Their hopes were never fulfilled. Vague promises took the place of hard commitments. Consultation only occurred when the Dominions pressed hard for it, and even then it was grudgingly granted. True, the Atlantic Battle and the endless trail of defeats in the Balkans and the Middle East allowed little time for reflection concerning a quiet area of the world, some 12,000 miles away. At the centre was Churchill, whose concept of the Empire was that it existed to give Britain a world position and prestige that she might otherwise not enjoy.<sup>133</sup> To Churchill, England was the focus of policy; and the Empire existed for the benefit of the mother country. Commonwealth unity did not attract him, nor did Imperial affairs beyond India. Furthermore, Churchill was not a reflective person: "Action this day", as he used to minute his military advisers, was his byword, and the Far East was not yet an "Action this day" area.

This attitude would lead him to ignore and neglect those parts of the world of which he had little real interest or knowledge. His obstinate approach to problems and solutions tended to reinforce his and others' accepted ideas that the Japanese were inferior in technological capability and in fighting qualities to the Italians. Furthermore, he clung tenaciously to his belief, based on an almost romantic concept of his written communications with Roosevelt and his equally romantic notions about the United States and the solidarity





of the Anglo-Saxon English-speaking world, that when the moment came, the United States would be ranged with Britain against the Axis. It was the Middle East which absorbed Churchill. There, battle had been joined, and he had some knowledge of that region, gained when he was a soldier, First Lord of the Admiralty, Colonial Secretary and Minister of State for War and Air. In this he had the full support of his First Sea Lord, Admiral Pound, whose usual contribution to debate was to argue that the Admiralty could not spare any ships for service east of Suez, except for a small force for the Indian Ocean. Like Churchill, Pound knew the Mediterranean, having been a young Rear-Admiral and Chief of Staff under Admiral Sir Roger Keyes in the Mediterranean Fleet. He himself had gone back to command that fleet in September 1935. He was not a man of bold imagination, not one to take risks. In 1940 he had wanted to withdraw the fleet from the eastern Mediterranean altogether. In addition, he really could not stand up to Churchill, to whom he was intensely loyal. He was not a man who thought of war in global terms: his eyes were fixed on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and he too held the belief that the Japanese were anything but efficient. Always maintaining an outward calm, he could parry Australian demands for some commitment to send a fleet to the Far East with vague promises - promises, as he informed his colleagues in the secret sessions of the Operations Committee, that could never be met. Even as he told Menzies that the Admiralty would scrape up a fleet, he also told the Defence Committee that he was against sending any ships to the Pacific. In this, he and Churchill were at one.

But it was the conviction, held most strongly by Churchill, that the United States would enter the war, which allowed the



British to ignore Menzies' pertinent question, what would happen to the large forces in the Middle East if the Mediterranean Fleet was sent to Singapore? The conviction was, that such a contingency would never arise. The American Fleet would be able to cope with the Japanese Navy, or else it would take over from the British in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. These beliefs prevented the British from thinking that the American Fleet might not be available, or might suffer grievous losses which would prevent it from giving immediate assistance to the Allied cause.

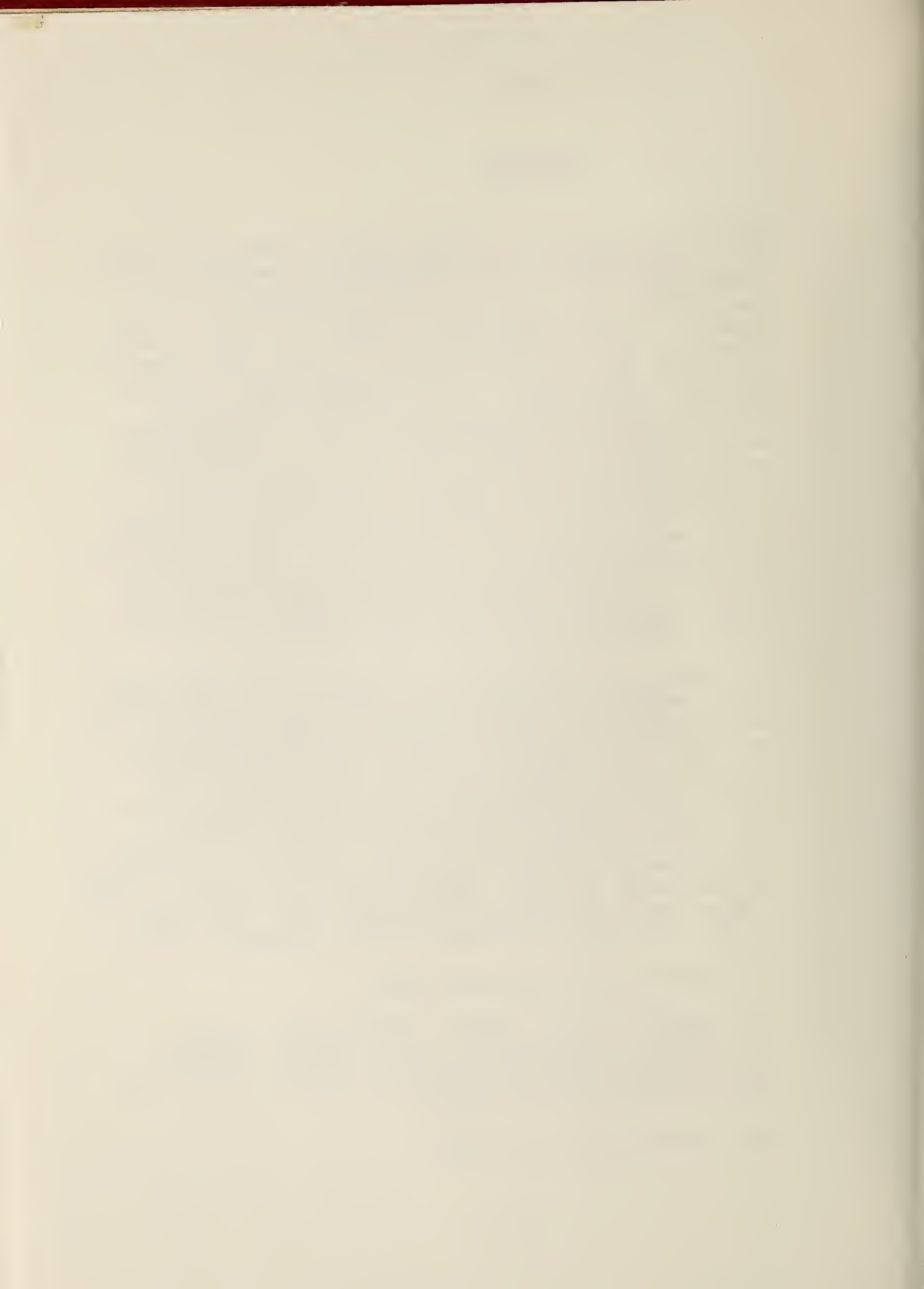
Finally, ever since the first assessment of a Japanese threat to Australia which had been made by the C.D.C. in 1902, there had never been real conviction in London that the Pacific Dominions would ever be subjected to a serious attack. Successive reports and appreciations had merely reinforced this assessment. Thus it was not surprising that the British would make promises they could not keep to the Dominions regarding their naval defence against the Japanese. There would never be a full scale Japanese attack on the Dominions.



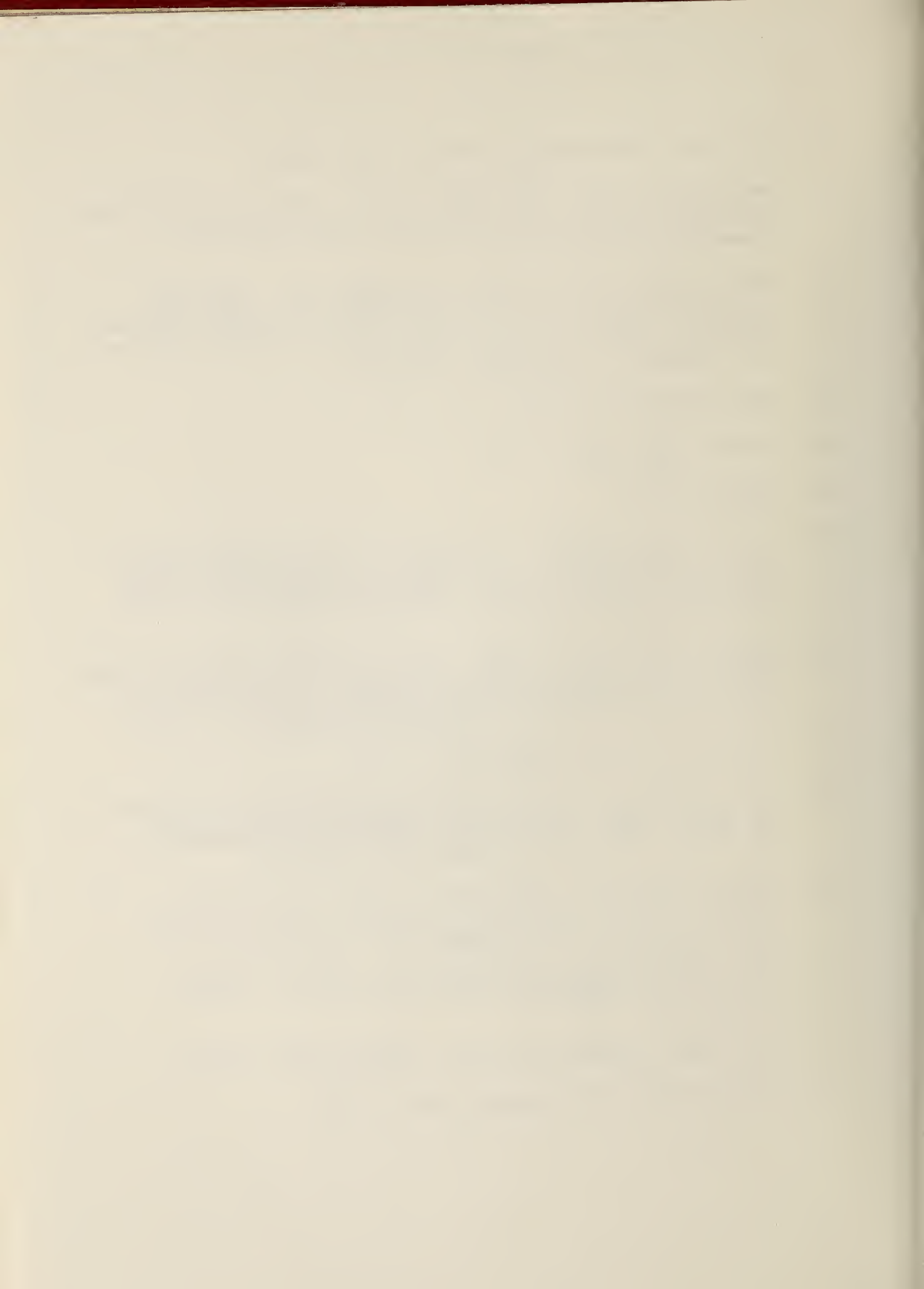


FOOTNOTES

1. The British position regarding the Far East was stated in an Aide Memoire which Lord Lothian presented to the State Department. In it was the statement that "we see no hope of being able to dispatch a fleet to Singapore". It would therefore be vital that the United States of America should publicly declare her intention to regard any alteration of the status quo in the Far East as a casus belli. Just prior to this was the Bailey Committee Aide Memoire for the Standardization of Arms Conference, which embraced the principles for active American participation. U.S. forces were to replace British forces (Naval) or reinforce them in areas where America's own interests lay, and American forces were to be used in those areas, where, operating from their own bases, they could also cover British interests within the American operational orbit. See Butler, Op. Cit., pp. 242-43, J.P. (40)380, Cab. 84/17, C.O.S. (40)604 (J.P.) 8/8/40, Cab. 80/16.
2. The Committee was dispatched in secret, but news leaked of its sailing. To cover the nature of its activities, it was called the Standardization of Arms Committee. It was the first time that an Army Planner had been sent to staff talks with the British. Previously it had always been an all-Navy show. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 22. P.D.08787/40, 21/6/40, Adm. 119/1157; J.P. (40)63 22/6/40, Cab. 84/27. In April, the German Naval Attache in Tokyo heard that the I.J.N. was ordered to make ready for war. However, this was refuted on the 17th of April by Vice-Admiral Kondo. Gill, Op. Cit., p. 250. The U.S.N. was moved to the Pacific in April.
3. J.P. (40)276, 27/6/40, Cab. 84/15.
4. J.P. (40)401, C.O.S. (40)667, 26/8/40, Cab. 84/18, J.P. (40)393, 22/8/40, Cab. 84/17. C.O.S. (40)629, (J.P.) 14/8/40., Cab. 80/16. J.P. (40)380, C.O.S. (40)604, (J.P.) 8/8/40, Cab. 84/17.
5. S.A. 7 (revised), Cab. 99/16.



6. S.A. (J) 3rd meeting, 31/8/40, Cab. 99/16.
7. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 25. Of all the Services, the Army was the most pessimistic about Britain's chances of holding out.
8. News of the London talks had leaked out. The Times reported that the Japanese now feared an Anglo-American alliance against her, and that the U.S. had got the use of Singapore. The Times, 23/9/40.
9. See Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II.
10. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 117.
11. Ibid. p. 118.
12. As early as May 1940, the American planners had written off the Philippines. L. Morton, "American and Allied Strategy in the Far East", Military Review, Vol. XXIX, (December 1949), p. 31.
13. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 119. See also Morton "Germany First, the Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II", in K.R. Greenfield, (ed) Command Decisions, N.Y. 1959.
14. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 25.
15. For a discussion of the Plan Dog Memorandum, see Watson Op. Cit., Chap. IV; Morrison, Battle of the Atlantic pp. 42-44; Sherwood, Op. Cit., pp. 271-272.
16. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 26. The Americans, however, might assist the British to reinforce their naval set-up on the Far East, by relieving them of naval obligations in the Atlantic. This would provide a more homogeneous force for Malaya. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 122.
17. File 1019, Lothian to F.O. , 17/6/40, Cab. 84/15.
18. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., pp. 29-30.



19. Ibid. p. 30. In the final version, the last paragraph was to read: "In the Atlantic or navally in the Mediterranean region". Loc. Cit., Fn. The Americans were never too anxious to become involved in protracted operations of the Mediterranean. See R.W. Thompson, The Price of Victory, London, 1960. pp. 29-34.
20. F.E. (40)2, 3/10/40, Cab. 99/1. Also International War Crimes Trial, Far East. Tokyo, (I.N.U.C.T.F.E.) Record, pp. 6343-6402.
21. J.P. (40)345, 23/7/40, Cab. 84/16. Also J.P. (40)437, 17/9/40, Cab. 84/18.
22. J.P. (40) 95th meeting, 16/9/40, Cab. 84/2.
23. J.P. (40)433 (S) 84/18, also W.P. (40)289, and W.M. (40)222.
24. P.M. to Washington, No. 2406, 29/9/40, Cab. 55/9.
25. J.P. (40)519 (S), 7/10/40, Cab. 84/20.
26. Ibid., Also J.P. (40)525, also C.O.S. (40)808, J.P. Cab. 80/20.
27. The American State Department was very wary of such talks during this time. Tele 2241, W.M. (40)270, 14/10/40.
28. Lord Lothian to London, No. 2177, 5/10/40, in C.O.S. (40)804, 6/10/40, Cab. 80/20 and No. 2241, 11/10/40, Cab. 79/7.
29. C.O.S. (40)807, 6/10/40, Cab. 80/20. Also C.O.S. (40) 344th and 347th meetings of 10/10 and 12/10/40, Cab. 79/7 and C.O.S. (40) 360th meetings, 26/10/40, Cab. 79/7.
30. W.M. 273(40) 10/10/40, also F.E. (40)4, 18/10/40, Cab. 96/1. Also C.O.S. (40) 347th meeting, 12/10/40, Cab. 79/7, and A.D.A. (40)3 (J), 14/10/40, Cab. 99/8.
31. That the conference dealt with the whole range of Far Eastern defence was due to the Australian and New Zealand insistence. The basis for discussion was that the U.S.A. would be first neutral, but her intervention was possible, though the Chiefs of Staff in London felt that





31. (continued)  
the U.S. would come in almost at once. They also ruled out an attack on Australia and New Zealand. The important thing, stated the delegates, was to prevent the Japanese from establishing striking points near Malaya. For various summaries of the conference, see Butler, Op. Cit., pp. 491-92, Kirby, Op. Cit., pp. 49-50, Wigmore, Op. Cit., pp. 41-44 and Hasluck Op. Cit., pp. 295-98.
32. A.D.A. (40)(J), 20.10/40, Cab. 99/8.
33. Report Singapore Defence Conference, 30/10/40, J.P. (40)783 (S), Cab. 84/25, and C.O.S. (40)1014, Cab. 84/25.
34. See Far East Tactical Appreciation, J.P. (41)1, 1/1/41, Cab. 84/26, and J.P. (40)746 (S), Cab. 84/24. For the Service Chiefs Appreciation, see Kirkby, Op. Cit., pp. 33-35, and for Commanders Report, Ibid., pp. 48-49, and J.P. (40)783 (S), Cab. 84/25, and C.O.S. (41) 13th meeting, Cab. 79/6, and C.O.S. (40)1055 (J.P.), Cab. 80/24.
35. The Dutch C-in-C, Rear Adm. Furstner, had met with R/Adm. Bellairs on October 31, Concerning Staff talks. He asked on behalf of his Government, for some commitment to come to the aid of the N.E.I.'s if they were attacked. Up to the moment, he had "received evasive replies". He agreed to the talks being held in the Far East, but he would not commit the Dutch to exchanging information with the U.S.A. until American collaboration was assured. A.D.A. (40)20, 31/10/40, Cab. 99/8.
36. J.P. (40)782 (S), 17/12/40, Cab. 84/25, and C.O.S. (40)1055 (J.P.), Cab. 80/24, and C-in-C China to Adm. 0212, 4/12/40, and No. 793, 0412, 28/12/40, Cab. 84/24 and B.U.S. (S) (41)10, 4/2/41, Cab. 99/5.
37. Naval Staff History, Vol. I, pp. 34-35; also Butler, Op. Cit., p.474. For the problems of supplies to the Dutch, see R.M. Leighton, Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1945, Washington, 1955, p. 88. Also J.P. (40)782 (S), 17/12/40, Cab. 84/23, C.O.S. (40)1055, (J.P.), Cab. 80/40, and C-in-C China to Adm., 0412, 4/12/40, and



37. (continued)  
0412, 28/40, Cab. 84/24. Also B.U.S. (J) (41)10, 4/2/41, Cab. 99/5. The Dutch representatives were Gen. H. Van Poortray, C.E.S.; Capt. Van Staverem, C.N.S.; Capt. Bueerman van Vreedem, General Staff.
38. C.O.S. (40) 347th meeting, 12/10/40, Cab. 79/7; and J.P. (40)545 (S), 14/10/40, Cab. 84/20.
39. Leter from Ghormley, 25/10/40, A.D.A. (40)18, 29/10/40, Cab. 99/8. Also P.D. 09192/40, Adm. 199/1232. Ghormley's questionnaire had been preceded by one from Capt. A.G. Kirk, U.S.N., Naval Attaché, London, concerning technical information regarding Singapore, which seemed to suggest that the U.S.N. was considering using the Base: Singapore Base Facilities: Questionnaire submitted on behalf of the Navy Department, 24/10/40, Cab. 99/8. The Answers are in A.D.A. (40)15, 24/10/40 and A.D.A. (J)(40), 30/10/40, Cab. 99/8. Also P.D. 09192 - Adm. 199/1232.
40. The reply was attached to A.D.A. (40)18, Cab. 99/8 and A.D.A. (40)22, 6/11/40, Cab. 99/8., and A.D.A. (J)(40), 30/10/40, Cab. 99/8.
41. For the difficulties tracking down German raiders, see Roskill, The War At Sea, Op. Cit., Vol. I, pp. 276-92.
42. A.D.A. (40)3, 14/10/40, Cab. 99/8, also C.O.S. (40) 347th meeting, 12/10/40, Cab. 79/7, and J.P. (40)546 (S) Draft, 15/10/40, and A.D.A. (40)6, 17/10/40, Cab. 99/8.
43. W.P. (40)302.
44. W.P. (40)362.
45. A.D.A. (J)(40)1, Annex, 20/10/40, Cab. 99/8.
46. J.P. (40)585, and C.O.S. (40)873 (J.P.), 27/10/40, Cab. 80/21. Also C.O.S. (40)955, 19/11/40, Cab. 80/23.
47. C.O.S. (40)893, Cab. 80/21. Also A.D.A. (J)(40)7, 9/11/40, Cab. 99/8.
48. Lothian to London, 30/11/40, in J.P. (40)735 (S), 6/12/40, Cab. 84/24. Also W.M. (40)283, 6/11/40, and





48. (continued)  
W.M. (40)287, 12/11/40. Also Instns. C.N.O. (U.S.N.)  
to Ghormley 4/12/40, Cab. 84/24.
49. Clarke to C.N.S. 6/12/40, No. 2952, Adm. 199/691.
50. Clarke to C.N.S. No. 2985, 9/12/40, in J.P. (40)762  
(S), Cab. 84/24.
51. Ghormley to Bailey 9/12/40, and personal visit  
Ghormley to Bailey, 9/12/40, P.D.09355/40, Adm. 199/691.
52. Pound to Bailey, 10/12/40, P.D.09355/40, Adm. 199/691.
53. Minute is in J.P. (40)762 (S), Cab. 84/24.

54. The problem was that the U.S. Pacific Fleet was not  
superior to the I.J.N.

	<u>Japan</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>U.S. Asiatic Fleet</u>
Battleships	- 10	8	-
Carriers	- 10	2	-
Cruisers	- 37	15	3
Destroyers	- 109	55	13
Submarines	- 63	11	21

The majority of the U. S. Asiatic Fleet was obsolescent.  
Naval Staff History, Vol. I, Appendix C (Japanese  
Forces), Ibid. Vol. II., Appendix E (U.S. Forces).

55. F.E. (40)65, 26/11/40, Cab. 96/1; and Memo 13351.,  
Adm. 1/10865.
56. C.O.S. (40)999, 30/11/40, Cab. 80/23.
57. First Sea Lord to First Lord, 27/11/40, and First Lord  
to Halifax, 29/11/40, Adm. 1/10865. Also C.O.S. (40)  
411th meeting, 2/12/40, Cab. 80/23.
58. C.O.S. (40)1035,(J.P.) and J.P. (40)774, 12/12/40,  
Cab. 80/24.
59. P.D.09352 (40), Adm. 199/691, and 8219, Adm. 199/1232.  
Also C.O.S. (40)1052, 19/12/40, Cab. 80/24 and Annex  
to J.P. (40)762 (S), Cab. 84/24.
60. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 28.



61. Minute 7/12/40 in J.P? (40)762 (S), Cab. 84/24.
62. D.C. (40) 51st meeting, 17/12/40, Cab. 69/1.
63. On board the ship was the new British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax. He was to take the place of Lord Lothian, who died on December 11, 1940. The British representatives had come over as members of the British Purchasing Commission. They were Rear Adm. R.M. Bellairs, Rear-Adm. V.H. Danckwerts, Maj.-Gen. E. L. Morris, Lt. Col. A.T. Cornwell-Jones, Air Commodore J.C. Slessor of the British Purchasing Commission and Capt. A.W. Clarke, R.N. British Assistant Naval Attaché. Regarding the secrecy, as Mr. Sherwood pointed out: "It is an ironic fact that in all probability, no great damage would have been done had the details of these plans fallen into the hands of the Germans and the Japanese, whereas had they fallen into the hands of the Congress and the press, American preparation for war might have been well nigh wrecked and ruined. R.E. Sherwood, The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, N.Y. 1952, pp. 273-74. Also Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 33. Australian, New Zealand and Canadian advisers were available for consultation, but did not take part in the conversations. Ibid, Fn. p. 33.
64. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 34, Statement British Delegation, 29/1/41, B.U.S. (J) (41)1, Cab. 99/5. As had been noted, this was not a new proposal, for on the 10th of May 1940, in his first official message as Prime Minister, Churchill had proposed that the Americans keep the Japanese quiet by using Singapore in any way convenient. Again in October, Churchill asked for a United States Navy Squadron to be sent to Singapore, and that the visit would provide a suitable occasion for technical discussions regarding naval operations with the Dutch and British. For these messages, see Churchill Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 27; Sherwood, Op. Cit., p. 141 and 174; Hull, Op. Cit., p. 881. The British had kept asking the Americans to either station a fleet at Singapore or to send some ships on a visit to the base. Churchill to Roosevelt, 04/10/40, Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 498. Also Craigie to London, 11/10/40,



64. (continued)  
in FE(40)3, 14/10/40, Cab. 96/1, WM(40)265, 03/10/40.  
The British wanted the visit at a time when they were  
about to reopen the Burma Road in October. W.M.(40)247,  
11/09/40 and C.O.S.(40)807, (J.P.) 06/10/40, Cab. 80/20.  
Butler, Vol. II, Op. Cit., p. 342. One thing the  
President did do was to transfer the United States Navy  
to Hawaii after the Japanese made their provocative  
remarks concerning interest in the Dutch East Indies.  
W.L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation,  
1937-1940, London, 1952, p. 588.
65. B.U.S. (J) (41)13, 11/2/41, Cab. 99/5.
66. See B.U.S. (J)(41)6, which outlined the military results  
of the fall of Singapore.
67. B.U.S. (J)(41)13, 11/2/41, Op. Cit.
68. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 35-36.
69. Ibid., p. 37. Also B.U.S. (J)(41)16, 19/2/41, Cab. 99/5.
70. However, The New York Times, of 20/2/41, in an editorial,  
stated that the "possibility of a Japanese attempt to  
seize Singapore is a threat which the United States can-  
not afford to view with indifference". It was reported  
in the Japanese press, Ashai, 14/2/41, that the Japanese  
feared the transfer of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet to Sing-  
apore. Quoted London Times, 15/2/41.
71. In Japan, rumours that Singapore was to be used by the  
U.S.N. were always stated as fact. e.g. H. Abend, Japan  
Unmasked, London, 1941., pp. 100-101. Also M.J. Gayn,  
The Fight for the Pacific, London, 1941, p. 7.
72. Naval Staff History, Vol. II, p. 9.
73. Morison , Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 50 fn.
74. London Times, 14/10/40. See also Morton, "Germany  
First", Op. Cit., p. 29. Naval Staff History, Vol. I,  
p. 42, and Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., pp. 287-88.





75. Adm. V.H. Danckwerts, B.U.S. (J)(41) 3rd meeting, 3/2/41, Cab. 99/5.
76. B.U.S. (J)(41), 11th meeting, 26/2/41, Cab. 99/5.
77. C.O.S. (41)250, 2/4/41, Cab. 80/27. Also J.P. (41)32, 24/4/41, 84/30.
78. B.U.S. (J)(41)23, Cab. 99/5. See also Final Report, B.U.S. (J)(41)23, 3/3/41, Cab. 99/5. Also B.U.S. (J)(41)30, 27/3/41, Cab. 80/27, B.U.S. (J)(41)30 and 39, Cab. 80/27.
79. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., pp. 41-48. Butler Op. Cit. pp. 426-427.
80. Sherwood, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 291, Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., p. 445.
81. W.P.(41)69, 26/3/41.
82. W.P.(41)88, 27/3/41.
83. W.M.(41)43, 24/4/41.
84. W.M.(41)48, 8/5/41.
85. J.I.C. (41)55, 5/2/41, Cab. 80/24, W.M.(41)13, 5/2/41. Tele Craigie to CO no. 184. See Feis, Op. Cit., Cap. XX, and Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., Chap. X. The British were desperately worried about the effect of a Japanese attack on their sea communications.
86. J.P.(41)95, 5/2/41, Cab. 84/27, also C.O.S.(41)74, 6/2/41, Cab. 80/25.
87. J.P.(41)95, 5/2/41, Cab. 84/27. Also J.P.(41)103, 7/2/41, Cab. 84/27, and C.O.S.(41) 46th meeting, 8/2/41, Cab. 79/9.
88. W.M. 41(14), 6/2/41, also I.M.T.F.E., rp. 9782-87.
89. H.C. to S.S. Dominions 13/2/41 in C.O.S. (41)107, Cab. 80/26. Also J.P.(41)157, Cab. 84/27.



90. Pound to P.M. 13/2/41. First Sea Lord Papers, Vol. X, Adm. 205/10.
91. C.O.S.(41) 54th meeting, 14/2/41, Cab. 79/9.
92. J.P.(41)103, 7/2/41, Cab. 84/27, C.O.S.(41) 46th meeting, 8/2/41, Cab. 79/9.
93. C.O.S. to Bellairs, in C.O.S.(41) 54th meeting, 14/2/41, Cab. 79/9.
94. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 178-79. Also C.O.S. (41)97, 13/2/41, Cab. 80/25. It is noteworthy that Churchill still talked of a large force to lay Singapore under siege and that the Japanese would get the Indies first to attack Singapore. Old conceptions die hard. One wonders if the British, fighting hard for the oil of the Middle East, ever considered the relation of Singapore to Japan's oil tanker routes. The British also informed the Americans that Germany was inducing Japan to attack and might do so in the very near future. Eden also had a stormy interview with the Japanese Ambassador in London, stating that while the Japanese professed peace, it was not in keeping with Matsuoka's bellicose speeches, and that if the Japanese intended to fight, they would be resisted to the limit. IMTFE. Record, pp. 9782-87.
95. In February when tension in the Far East was at a pitch, President Roosevelt wished to send a detachment of U.S.N. ships to the Philippines as a bluff. Admiral Stark vetoed it. C. Beard, President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, New Haven, 1948, pp. 423-24. The C-in-C Far East had been warned to watch for a Japanese move towards Malaya. See C.O.S.(41) 47th meeting, 10/2/41, Tele 55, Cab. 79/9.
96. Pound to P.M., 3/2/41, Vol. X, Adm. 205/10.
97. W.M.(41)19 and 20 of 23 and 24/2/41.
98. Tele no. 16, 9/2/41, B.U.S.(41)17, 22/2/41 in Cab. 99/5, repeated no. 97 to London, 15/2/41, in J.P.(41)129 (S), 16/2/41, Cab. 84/27.
99. J.P.(41)157, 26/2/41, Cab. 84/27.





100. Tele. no. 116, 23/2/41, in J.P.(41)157, Annex 11, Cab. 84/27.
101. One interesting point was that at the 11th meeting of the ABC talks, the Americans stated that a representative (Chief of Staff) of the American C-in-C Asiatic Fleet, was then at Singapore with full powers to arrange mutual co-operation with the British and Dutch, subject to later approval. B.U.S. (J)(41) 11th meeting, 26/2/41, Cab. 99/5. Nothing is known of this and it is not mentioned in the final report of the talks nor in the ADA agreement.
102. A.D.A. Conference 22, 25/2/41, Cab. 84/31 and C.O.S. (41)208, 13/3/41, Cab. 80/27.
103. A.D.A. Agreement, 25/2/41, Cab. 84/31.
104. C.O.S. (41)208, 13/3/41, Cab. 80/27, C.O.S. (41) 13th meeting, Cab. 79/8.
105. Tele. 246, 14/2/41, Cab. 94/4.
106. J.P.(41)133, 19/2/41, Cab. 84/27.
107. Meeting at Admiralty, 28/3/41, Cab. 99/4.
108. The memo is contained in J.P.(41)277, 8/4/41, Cab. 84/29.
109. The cable is quoted in full in Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 704-05.
110. J.P.(41)277, 8/4/41, Cab. 89/29.
111. D.O.C.(41)12, 9/4/41, Cab. 69/2.
112. C.O.S.(41)230, 11/4/41, Cab. 80/27.
113. Tele 252, 24/4/51 in J.P.(41)335, 28/4/41, Cab. 84/30. Also C.O.S.(41)262, 24/4/41, Cab. 80/30.
114. C.O.S.(41) 150th meeting, Cab. 79/11.
115. J.P.(41)335, Op. Cit., also J.P.(41)334(S), Cab. 84/30, and C.O.S.(41)262, Op. Cit.



116. D.O.(41) 20th meeting, 29/4/41, Cab. 69/2.
117. B.U.S.(J) 11th meeting, 26/2/41, Op. Cit.
118. The cable is dated 21/4/41 and is in C.O.S.(41)258, 22/4/41, Cab. 80/27.
119. Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., pp. 446-451.
120. Halifax to F.O., Gleam 42, No. 1883, 29/4/41, Cab. 65/2.
121. D.O.(41) 21st meeting, 30/4/41, Cab. 69/2.
122. D.O.(41) 22nd meeting, 1/5/41, Cab. 69/2.
123. Boxes 36, no. 2336 in D.O.(41)65, Cab. 69/2.
124. The Teles to Halifax are in W.M.(41)48, 8/5/41.
125. Butler, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 503.
126. D.O.(41) 31st meeting 19/5/41, Cab. 69/2.
127. Morison, Op. Cit., Col. III, p. 58. Also D.O.(41)40, 10/6/41, Cab. 69/2 and Gleam 63, 7/6/41 in C.O.S.(41) 365, Cab. 80/28.
128. Conclusions and Recommendations of the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, Op. Cit., p. 378.
129. Dispatch on the Far East, C-in-C. Far East, M09931/45, Adm. 199/1185.
130. Tele U.K. delegation Washington to London, Gleam, No. 71, 19/6/41, Cab. 69/2.
131. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., pp. 43-48.
132. Morison, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 152.
133. W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, London, 1965, Vol. II, p. 283.



## CHAPTER X

### THE WIDENING WAR AND FAR EAST STRATEGY

In Tokyo, the German Ambassador General E. Ott informed Berlin in late January 1941 that certain Japanese were advocating a surprise attack on Singapore to prevent its being used by the Americans. But he and his staff felt that such an action would bring the Americans into the conflict, and that it would create a new theatre of war far removed from German control.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after, he had a conversation with the Japanese Foreign Minister, Matsuoka, who was soon to leave for Germany. Ott reported that Matsuoka had told him that should the United States appear to be entering the war, Japan would consider an attack on Singapore as a means of preventing America from waging war in the Pacific. Matsuoka added that such an attack would not take place without full consultation with Germany, but that plans were under way for such an eventuality.<sup>2</sup>

Berlin did not share Ott's doubts. Both Hitler and his Foreign Minister wanted Japan to attack Singapore as a means of bringing Britain to her knees.<sup>3</sup> Ribbentrop kept prodding the Japanese Ambassador, General Hitoshi Oshima, to get a firm Japanese commitment to move against Singapore. But all that Oshima would say was that plans for the attack were in preparation, but that, for safety's sake, these plans had to take account of a war with both the United Kingdom and the United States.<sup>4</sup>

So, the Japanese remained firmly non-committal. Ott, who had been recalled to Berlin to take part in the conver-





sations with Matsuoka, reported that the Japanese Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff, while preparing for an attack on Singapore, were worried about American submarine and air warfare against Japan's lines of communications, free to operate from the Philippines. They were also nervous about the transfer of Royal Navy ships from the Mediterranean to the Far East. The Army leaders wanted to be certain that the U.S.S.R. would not make a hostile move. They were not ready to enter the war without such an assurance.<sup>5</sup>

Such was the background of the Matsuoka-Ribbentrop talks which opened in Berlin on March 24, ironically at the moment when the A.B.C.-1 talks were about to be concluded.

The conversations turned out to be inconclusive.<sup>6</sup> Matsuoka remained non-committal against all German attempts to get a definite Japanese commitment to attack Singapore. All he would say was that plans for such an attack were well under way. Matsuoka was not informed by either Ribbentrop or Hitler about Operation 'Barbarossa', the attack on Russia; and Hitler had instructed his General Staff not to mention it to Matsuoka.<sup>7</sup> This was not too popular a decision, for Admiral Raeder, on March 18, advised Hitler to tell the Japanese of the coming assault, so that they could attack Singapore. Weizsacker,<sup>9</sup> the German Vice-Minister of the German Foreign Office, raised this matter with Ribbentrop, with equal lack of result.<sup>10</sup> Hitler so little trusted the Japanese and Matsuoka to keep the 'secret, that in their last talk he told Matsuoka that Germany would not attack the U.S.S.R. if she remained friendly, and that he agreed to a Soviet-Japanese Pact.<sup>11</sup>

Matsuoka's agreement with the concept of an assault on Singapore has to be viewed sceptically, for it is doubtful if he really felt that such a move would best serve



Japanese interests. On closer examination of the conversations, one gets the impression that Matsuoka hedged giving a precise answer to German demands, leaving the decision to his Government.<sup>12</sup>

Unaware of the coming German onslaught on Russia, Matsuoka went to Moscow on April 13, where he concluded a Neutrality Pact with the U.S.S.R.<sup>13</sup>

When Germany attacked the U.S.S.R. in June, Matsuoka faced a crisis. He had conceded more to the Russians than authorized. However, he did a right-about-face once the Russo-German war began and advocated an attack on the Soviet Union, which was Germany's desire also.<sup>14</sup> Matsuoka appealed, over Konoye's head, to the Emperor, thus straining his relations with the Premier even more.<sup>15</sup> The result was victory in a sense for the Southern policy, for after a series of Liaison Conferences, it was decided to not tangle with Russia.<sup>16</sup>

This marked the end of Mr. Matsuoka's influence and position. On July 18, the Konoye Cabinet resigned in order to rid themselves of their exuberant Foreign Minister, replacing him in the new Cabinet with Admiral Teijiro Toyoda.

While the Germans and Japanese were discussing the possibility of an attack on Singapore, a conference of American, British and Dutch commanders was arranged taking place at Singapore, to formulate plans for the conduct of a Far Eastern war on the basis of the strategic policy formulated at the Washington Conference.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, the Joint Planners submitted a memorandum covering the various aspects of British Strategic Policy in the Far East and the terms of reference for Part II of the A.D.A. Conference. This dealt in detail with the reinforce-





ment of the Far East with capital ships if Japan entered the war. Taking into account the strength of the German Fleet, which consisted of the Bismarck, Tirpitz, two Gneisenau class and two Scheer class ships,\* and assuming that none were out of action,<sup>18</sup> the Planners estimated that the barest minimum needed to meet the German Fleet was two King George class, one Queen Elizabeth class and two battlecruisers. In the Mediterranean, the campaign in the Balkans and the introduction of German land forces in the Western Desert had created circumstances where "there can be no question of an immediate withdrawal of the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet to meet an attack on Australia". If the decision was taken to give up the Eastern Mediterranean, the Fleet would have to stay to the last to cover the evacuation of the Army, but the recent successes of the Navy against the Italian Fleet \*\* led the Planners to believe that the Eastern Mediterranean could be held by two Queen Elizabeth class ships.

In the Western Mediterranean lay Force H, which might be sent to the Far East, provided that no heavy German ships were in the Atlantic. In that case, one heavy unit would be required to protect the Sierra Leone convoys.

In the Atlantic, the old R Class battleships were needed on escort duties. To employ the Home Fleet would disperse the

---

\* Bismarck and Tirpitz, 52,600 tons, 8 x 15" guns, 30.8 Kts. Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, 38,100 tons, 9 x 11" guns, 31.5 Kts. Admiral Graf Spee and Admiral Scheer, 12,100 tons, 6 x 11" guns, 28 Kts. Lutzow (formerly Deutschland) 11,700 tons, 6 x 11" guns, 28 Kts. Graf Spee was sunk on December 13, 1939. The Bismarck sunk the Hood (battlecruiser) on May 24, 1941, and in turn was sunk on May 27.

\*\* This was the Battle of Cape Matapan when the Mediterranean Fleet, under Admiral Cunningham, sunk three Italian cruisers and two destroyers on March 28-29.



one concentrated force able to meet the German Fleet. At least two R Class had to be kept on the convoy routes. In addition, two other heavy ships would always be under repair. When taking all this into consideration, the Fleet available for the Far East, if circumstances did not change dramatically, would be two Nelsons, one battlecruiser, one Barham and one Revenge.<sup>19</sup> The time estimated for the ships to concentrate at Tricomali was 60 days after the order to move had been issued. The Planners also added that the light forces needed to attend the heavy ships could be made available, but only by taking risks in other theatres.

They concluded that it would be folly to denude the critical areas of ships to send an inferior fleet to the Far East. Thus they felt the best policy would be to limit naval reinforcements for the Pacific to the bare minimum required to protect vital sea-communications. They noted that it would only be in the event of a direct threat to Australia that the scraping-together of such a fleet would be justified. The strategic deployment of the fleet sent would be to protect the Dominion by cutting Japanese communications.<sup>20</sup>

For this purpose, a base nearer Australia and more on the flank of the Japanese lines of communications would be required; for example, Sydney, Port Darwin and Port Moresby suggest themselves....\*

The implication of the above was profound. It was a vindication of all those who had tenaciously fought the Singapore concept and advocated a base in Australia. It was an

---

\* My Italics.





admission that Singapore was not in a position to prevent a Japanese attack on Australia, a fact noted many times by others, who had pointed out that the direct line between Australia and Japan was 3,000 miles east of the Base. Further, it was a tacit admission that the Singapore concept had ceased to be viable, once the Admiralty did not have the Fleet to send East.

The basis for strategic planning at the forthcoming American-Dutch-British talks (A.D.B.) was contained in a telegram from the Admiralty to the C-in-C China, Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, who was to chair the conference.<sup>21</sup>

Planning was to be based on the assumption that the U.S. would be an active ally, and that the British Far Eastern Fleet would be derived from units replaced by American ships in the Atlantic. It was felt, as in all previous appreciations, that the presence of the U.S.N. at Hawaii would inhibit the Japanese, and that the combined U.S.-British-Dutch forces could dispute the passage to the Netherlands Indies. Japanese incursions into the Indian Ocean would be curtailed, since the Japanese would have to provide heavy escorts for their operations in the South China Seas to guard against the U.S.N. The chief objective of the Allied forces would be the defence of Singapore. The plan for this defence was based on holding operations until the Far Eastern Fleet could arrive, and this was contingent on the speed with which the U.S.N. replaced British ships at Gibraltar and other stations. It was calculated that from Day One (the day the U.S. entered the war), it would take eighty days for the British fleet to arrive at Singapore.

The A.D.B. conversations took place at Singapore from April 21 to 27. The United States' Chief of Staff Asiatic Fleet, Capt. W.R. Purnell, was a participant. The delegates





signed an agreement, which was a plan for the deployment and co-operation of their respective forces in the event of a war with Japan. Though no political commitment was involved, it was assumed that the United States would be an active ally.<sup>22</sup> The Conference recognized that Germany was to be defeated first, and that Japan was to be contained while economic pressure was brought to bear before an Allied offensive against her forces was undertaken.

In strategic terms, the first priority was the security of sea-communications, the second the security of Singapore. An attack on one was reckoned an attack on all. It was important that the American Pacific Fleet should be equal in strength to the Japanese Navy. The strategy to be employed was that outlined in the Admiralty memorandum. Phase One was to be a defensive period of holding on to bases and securing communications.

Phase Two occurred when the British Fleet arrived.<sup>23</sup> The objective of the British Eastern Fleet would be to operate from Singapore, where it might be joined by the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, which would come under British command. The strength of the British Naval Forces would be sufficient to enable the Associated Powers to seize the initiative and to launch "powerful counter attacks against such Japanese forces as may have established their position." "In the unlikely event of" the fleet being unable to use Singapore, it would operate from bases in the Indian Ocean, securing sea-communications and contesting any Japanese moves to the south or west, and possibly relieving pressure on Malaya by sorties in the Malacca Straits. However, there were so many variables governing the dispatch of the British Fleet and its composition "that it is not profitable to examine in greater detail the operations



that would then be possible".

The report stressed that the greatest danger to the Associated Powers was by Japanese attacks on their sea-communications. On the Allied side, submarines and air-power were considered the best immediate means to counter Japanese action, coupled with the threatening influence of the American Pacific Fleet on Japanese strategic movements.<sup>24</sup>

At the conclusion of the A.D.B. Conference, a further agreement was signed between the British, the Dominions, and Dutch authorities<sup>25</sup> which governed their joint action in the event of a Far Eastern conflict. This agreement, which the Americans did not sign, followed closely the Joint Planners' instructions and strategic summary of April 13. In this document, the British naval reinforcements were to consist of the Ark Royal, and Renown from Force H at Gibraltar, which were to cover communications in the Indian Ocean. There was no mention of an Eastern Fleet or of offensive operations, for "our policy must still remain defensive until a radical change in the world-wide situation occurs". In this plan, the United States was regarded as being neutral, though American influence could not be disregarded and the American Fleet might act as a deterrent on the scale of attack that Japan might launch on British and Dutch territory. The strategic aim was to hold off the Japanese as far as possible, while securing sea-communications and Singapore. The naval reinforcements envisaged could "not materially alter our defensive policy or permit any offensive action against Japanese naval forces".

The salient features of both reports was the under-estimation of what the Japanese were capable of doing, and an over-estimation of what the Allies could do. In particular,





there was a constant reference to the tying-down of considerable Japanese forces in China and the Japanese worry about Russian reaction. As with the A.D.B. report, the signing of it did not imply a political commitment by any of the nations represented. (At least, that is what it said).

It was now obvious that the British naval strategy was completely dependent on American support in the Far East, and that, until that support was definite, there would and could be no commitment to the Dutch.<sup>26</sup> The British attempted to gain from the Americans some statement of support should Japan attack Dutch or British possessions in the Far East, but to no avail. Summer Welles reported that "Eden .... asked me repeatedly what our country would do if Japan attacked Singapore or the Dutch, saying that it was essential to their policy to know."<sup>27</sup>

Yet even while no definite commitments were forthcoming from the Americans, Churchill and to some extent the C.O.S. believed that American support would be there when the time came. They had told Menzies this, claiming that the American attitude had strengthened Australia's security, and Churchill had made the same claim at the meetings of the Defence Committee.<sup>28</sup> But Menzies was not told that the Americans did not rate the contribution of the Dominions or the British possessions in the Far East very high in terms of their economic, material or manpower value to the war effort, all of which they felt could be replaced from the Western Hemisphere. Nor were the Australians aware at the time of the conflict that was taking place between Churchill and the C.O.S. concerning the strategic priority of Singapore as opposed to the Middle East. Churchill was obsessed with the Desert War.

Here was the only place where British and Commonwealth



troops were in battle against the enemy. To Churchill, only the defence of the United Kingdom ranked higher in priorities.

But there was a growing rift between the C.O.S. and Churchill, which emerged at a meeting of the Defence Committee in early April, just when the Greek Campaign was starting to go badly.<sup>29</sup> Churchill proposed the blocking of Tripoli Harbour, using an old capital ship. The object was to curtail German supplies to the Afrika Corps. He informed the Committee that

As to the results of losing a capital ship, he was not counting on the Japanese entering the war at an early date, nor was he counting on the United States of America remaining neutral if they did so.

But the Committee refused to agree to Churchill's plan, on the grounds that the Admiralty was already hard pressed for this type of ship. A week later, Churchill persuaded them to send a fast convoy through the Mediterranean with supplies for the Desert Army. This operation, code-named "Tiger", was one of great hazard, for the escort compromised Force H for part of the run, and Cunningham's Fleet from the Skerki Channel to Alexandria, all of which were within range of enemy air attack. On this occasion, however, the gamble paid off and the convoy arrived almost intact.<sup>30</sup>

However, when Churchill wanted to try to get another convoy through, the Joint Planners and the C.O.S. dug their heels in, and told him that even if the convoy got through, with six capital ships already out of action, it would be "on the edge of folly to undertake without better cause, an operation in which further loss or damage to our naval forces seems to be highly certain, especially with Japan on edge".<sup>31</sup>





But Churchill was still not willing to have the Far East accorded anything but the lowest of priorities. As he wrote, it came forth after the defence of the United Kingdom, the Middle East, and aid to Russia.<sup>32</sup>

On April 28, at a meeting of the C.O.S., Churchill outlined his view of Far Eastern strategy, telling his military advisers that Japan would be unlikely to enter the war unless Britain was invaded. Even the loss of the Middle East would not entice Japan to war, as the Mediterranean Fleet would be free to go to the Far East, as would British troops evacuated from that theatre. The Prime Minister repeated his oft-stated contention that Japan would not move as they feared the Americans entering the war, and as far as he was concerned, once Japan attacked, the United States would be ranged on Britain's side. These conditions, Churchill said

are to be accepted by the Service Departments as a guide for all plans and actions. Should they cease to hold good, it will be the responsibility of Ministers to notify the Service staffs in good time.<sup>33</sup>

The C.O.S. were reluctant to acquiesce in this directive. They replied that, when dealing with the Far East, the Service Staffs must have three months' warning, since that was the minimum period required for reinforcements to reach Malaya. Nor did they agree that the loss of Egypt would be an unprecedented disaster: disaster would only occur if the Battle of the Atlantic was lost, or if Britain was invaded.<sup>34</sup>

This thesis had previously been put to Churchill by the C.I.G.S., General Sir John Dill, on May 6. As to the possible loss of Egypt, the General, in a report which made the rounds





of his colleagues in the other services, pointed out

It is the United Kingdom and not Egypt that is vital, and the defence of the United Kingdom must take first place. Egypt is not even second in priority, for it has been an accepted principle in our strategy that in the last resort, the security of Singapore comes before that of Egypt. Yet the defences of Singapore are still considerably below standard.<sup>35</sup>

The issue now centered on Churchill's willingness to send reinforcements and materials to the Middle East, on the gamble that Hitler would not invade, and that the Far East would remain peaceful. Replying to Dill, he adhered to his firm convictions that the United States would enter the war, and in any case, Japan would be unlikely to besiege Singapore at the outset of hostilities. To Churchill, the greatest problem would arise from the Japanese cruisers and battlecruisers operating along Britain's Eastern Trade routes.<sup>36</sup> He insisted that the Middle East demanded the highest priority: the Far East could and would have to wait.<sup>37</sup>

Dill, however, was not yet ready to concede to Churchill. That same day, he replied that while it was difficult not to advocate offensive action, still it was often braver to admit to that fact. The C.I.G.S.'s concern was that the same mistake - that of under-rating the enemy - would be made twice. Further, regarding Singapore, Dill's idea was the same as Churchill's own. Dill quoted Churchill's own previous view expressed in a memorandum of November 17, 1939, on the defence of Australia,

We wish to make it plain that we regard the defence of Australia, and of Singapore as a stepping-stone to Australia, as ranking next to the mastering of the principal fleet to which we are opposed, and that if the choice were



presented of defending Australia against a serious attack, or sacrificing British interests in the Mediterranean, our duty to Australia would take precedence.

I agree with you that the defence of Singapore requires only a fraction of the troops required for the defence of Egypt. But since three months must be allowed for shipments to reach Malaya, it is necessary to look well ahead. If we wait till emergency situations arise, in the Far East, we shall be too late.<sup>38</sup>

However, the stream of reinforcements to the Middle East went on unabated. Churchill had little difficulty in convincing his Cabinet colleagues or the heads of the Army and Air Force that this was the policy to be pursued. But he placed it in the context of stripping the defences of the United Kingdom, whereas Dill was endeavouring not so much to stop the flow to the Middle East as to get some of that flow diverted to Singapore.

It was a strategic gamble, one that was to starve Singapore of war material and bring down upon the British Commonwealth its greatest military disaster in modern times. It was partly based on political considerations, which, if one examines the material available, had little relation to the realities of the American scene. There was absolutely no reason at that time to suppose that the United States would enter the war if the Japanese attacked British or Dutch possessions in the Far East. In fact, the contrary is the case, and the British never obtained, until the last moment, any clear statement from the Americans as to what course they would pursue if Japan attacked. This was poor concrete on which to build concepts of strategy. To Churchill, the loss of Malaya would never amount to a fifth of the loss of Egypt, the Suez Canal and the Middle East. This view, states Churchill





in his History, was shared by his colleagues.<sup>39</sup> But there is evidence otherwise.

In June 1941, the Future Operations Section of the J.P.S.C. presented an elaborate paper on future strategy to the Defence Committee.<sup>40</sup> It repeated what had been said many times previously concerning Singapore as the key to British strategy in the Far East, and that measures should be taken to ensure its defences. The British interests in the Far East had become obscured by other threats that were more grimly real, but nevertheless

the effect of Japan's entry into the war will depend on the fate of Singapore. If we lose Singapore, the strategic consequences will be disastrous. If we hold it, Japan's intervention, though it will add greatly to our existing naval commitments and economic difficulties, should have no decisive effect on the war in the west.

The Middle East, the Planners pointed out, came into a different category, as with the Mediterranean already closed, the direct cost of its loss would not be vital so long as the enemy was prevented from gaining control of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The loss of Egypt, regardless of its magnitude, was second to the loss of the United Kingdom, Britain's vital sea communications, or of Singapore.

It is now necessary to return to the A.D.B. Conference, for arising from it were basic differences in strategic thinking between the Americans and the British, which were never to be resolved. The Conference outlined in some detail the basic plans for the deployment of Allied naval forces in the event of a Far Eastern war, which assumed a British fleet would arrive in about eighty days, and that when the U.S. came



in, and after the Philippines were invested, the U.S. Asiatic Fleet would retire on Singapore and help in its defence. It was agreed by the Conference that the British Naval C-in-C Far East would direct all naval forces, other than those engaged in local defence or operating under the C-in-C, U.S. Asiatic Fleet. The eastern theatre was to comprise of the Netherlands East Indies, China, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. The Conference also made recommendations on what should be considered a cause for war, the principle being a direct act of war against any of the powers; a movement by Japanese forces into Siam west of the meridian of Bangkok ( $100^{\circ}\text{E}$ ) or south of the Kra Isthmus ( $10^{\circ}\text{N}$ ); the occupation of Portuguese Timor, New Caledonia or the Loyalty Islands; the movement of Japanese expeditions directed on the Philippines, across a line from the Gulf of Vavao to Waigeo or across the Equator east of Waigeo.

The American delegate, Colonel Allen McBride, was unfortunately delayed in getting to the Conference. When he arrived, he was presented with the British summary of the proceedings. Naturally enough, the importance of Singapore, whose security depended on denying to the Japanese bases in the Netherlands East Indies, was emphasized. But the necessity of holding Luzon in the Philippines was also underlined, since, as long as submarines and air forces could operate from that area, Japanese expeditions to threaten Malaya or the East Indies from the East could be outflanked.<sup>41</sup>

From the documents that refer to this Conference, it is apparent that the British were trying to induce the Americans to reverse their basic strategy and commit themselves to reinforcing the defence of the Philippines. For the British this was sound strategy: a strong American force in Luzon could help block a Japanese advance towards Singapore, and





possibly, in the event of war, guarantee American participation in the defence of Singapore as a means for the defence of the whole area. As the British saw it, the defence of Singapore and the Philippines were complementary: if the Americans could be convinced to defend the former, they had to help defend the latter.

When the officer commanding the Philippines, Major General George Grunert, read the report, he immediately saw that it was not in keeping with American policy,<sup>42</sup> which did not regard the Philippines as strategically important. In his opinion, the British were more concerned with the defence of Singapore than with the defence of American interests in the Philippines. Further, the British tended to regard the whole of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet as available for the defence of Singapore. Grunert informed the British that the United States contemplated no immediate strengthening of the Philippines and that the Americans only planned for a determined defence of the immediate area of Manila.<sup>43</sup>

The American Chiefs both of the Army and Navy came to the same conclusion: the report of the Conference went beyond the realm of the A.B.C. decisions as a "practical operating plan for the Far East area". On June 7, they sent, with the President's approval, a strongly-worded rejection of the views expressed at Singapore, in which they stated<sup>44</sup> that there was no intention to alter American strategic policy in the Far East, or to reinforce the Philippines except in minor particulars. The American Chiefs of Staff also rebelled against the British suggestion for a unified naval command, which they felt was beyond the scope of the Conference to decide.<sup>45</sup>





In the eyes of the Americans, the security of the Malay Barrier and Netherlands East Indies was inadequate anyway, and their defence must rest upon U.S. and Dutch naval forces, while those of the British operated on convoy and patrol duties far from this vital area. Until there was a plan providing that British naval forces take the predominant part in defending their own positions in the Far East,<sup>46</sup> the U.S. Asiatic Fleet would not be allowed to operate under British direction. The American Chiefs of Staff were unwilling to reinforce the Philippines at a time when other, more important theatres, needed reinforcement. In blunt terms, the Americans told the British that if Singapore was of such vital interest to the defence of the Far East and the cohesion of the British Commonwealth, it was up to the British to provide for its defence and not to expect the Americans to undertake the naval protection of that area.

In early August, the British C.O.S. instructed the Joint Planners to prepare a rebuttal to the American objections to the A.D.B. report.<sup>47 48</sup> The Planners declared that the American objection to the Asiatic Fleet's coming under British Command was unrealistic, as, if the Philippines were invested, the American naval forces ~~per~~force would have to fall back to Singapore. The only other base to which the Fleet could retire was Pearl Harbor, and that was too distant. Nor did the Planners agree that only American and Dutch naval forces should defend the vital British area - Malaya/Sumatra/Java and eastward, while British forces only protected Imperial sea-communications in the Indian Ocean. The British claimed that the Indian Ocean would absorb all the naval forces the Admiralty could spare, and air power would have to help main-



tain the Malaya-east line. Remaining naval forces would have to concentrate on local defence until the British main fleet arrived. What the Planners saw as sound strategy was for the Americans to reinforce the Philippines, so it could hold out until the British Fleet arrived, and that the U.S. Asiatic Fleet should move to Singapore, in accordance with plans drawn up at the A.B.D. Conference.

These ready British answers to American criticisms of the A.D.B. report could not convince the Americans to reinforce the Philippines. Nor could the British guarantee anything more than they had guaranteed to the Dominions in the way of naval reinforcement for the Far East. The Admiralty did not have any spare ships. The truth was that there was little chance, as the Americans well knew, of a British Far Eastern fleet ever materializing. But there was still the assumption that the American Fleet at Pearl Harbor would be able, should war come, to curtail Japanese operations southwards. But the British had been informed by Admiral Danckwerts and Captain Clarke from Washington, that the American Pacific Fleet had no plans to deploy forward in the event of war. It possessed no war plan, and within the wardrooms of its ships, there was concern that, compared to the Japanese Navy, it was a "light weight" fleet.<sup>49</sup>

While these sharp differences over Far Eastern strategy were being argued between London and Washington, the C-in-C China Station, Vice-Admiral Layton and Admiral Hart, C-in-C Asiatic Fleet, U.S.N., decided to continue drafting plans for the participation of the United States in the Far East area. The drafts of these plans were adjusted from time to time to meet changes in American policy. The Netherlands East Indies' authorities also agreed to join in since the





plans could be applied to British-Dutch co-ordination regardless of whether the United States came in.<sup>50</sup>

The two Admirals hoped for British naval reinforcements within six months, as the Americans were assuming a larger escort of the Atlantic Battle, allowing the British to withdraw four battleships. The intention was to form a new 3rd Battle Squadron in the Eastern Fleet and one or possibly two modern capital ships were to arrive sometime early in the New Year.

The Japanese were also making plans. At first hesitant when British fortunes seemed to rise in the Middle East and amidst British skies, the Japanese now saw these fortunes plunge to a new low. The moment seemed ripe to move south. In this, they were baulked initially by Dutch refusals to allow them oil concessions. But these, rather than deterring the Japanese, spurred them into more reckless paths.<sup>51</sup> Oil was the problem. Japan depended heavily on overseas supplies and had to get the Indies. If they could not get them by peaceful means, then force was to be used.<sup>52</sup> However, to accomplish this aim, bases had first to be secured in Southern Indo-China.

The Japanese got Vichy's "consent" to occupy bases in Southern Indo-China. The chance that this might lead to war with the Allies was accepted previously by the Imperial Conference of July 2, at Tokyo, as a risk to be taken.<sup>53</sup>

On July 24, the Japanese marched into South Indo-China.

In America, opinion was hardening. It was felt that Japanese moves were undermining the security of the United States, as they straddled key trade-routes and encircled the Philippines. The British felt that what was required was a joint declaration by the United States and the British Common-



wealth that an attack on one would be considered as affecting the vital interests of the other.<sup>54</sup> They were convinced that the Japanese would halt if they were led to believe that pursuit of their aggressive policy would mean war against the United States.<sup>55</sup>

The President asked Admiral Stark his opinion on embargoes on Japan. On July 22, Stark wrote that if the Japanese were denied oil, they would fight; and if Japan did resort to force, she would attack the Philippines and thus involve the United States in war.

American policy, long based on keeping Japan out of the war in order to concentrate in the Atlantic, was beginning to stiffen towards Japan. On July 25, the President, by Executive order, froze all Japanese assets in the United States and placed a total embargo on all goods to Japan.

This decision was a move that threatened to bring in its train the most dire consequences, and place British interests in the Far East under the threat of war.<sup>56</sup> During July, the British had been trying to obtain from the United States some idea what their policy would be if the Japanese did go to war. To all his inquiries, Halifax received evasive answers. All that he could elicit was that Washington expected the United Kingdom to follow the American lead in placing an embargo on exports to Japan. They would say only that to give an announcement of American plans would play into the hands of the enemy. It would seem that this was only an excuse to cover up a lack of decision in Washington, which was based on the premise that the Japanese were bluffing.<sup>57</sup>

In London, the British were faced with a cruel dilemma. Each Japanese move southward put the security of Singapore in jeopardy, yet there was little they could do about it. The British strategic policy was governed by what the United States





would do if Japan attacked, and until Britain had a firm commitment from the Americans, she was not prepared to offer any hard assurances to the Dutch. British policy in dealing with the Netherlands authorities was to agree to the military clauses of the A.B.D., but refuse any political commitment, for the issue of war would "have to be decided by the governments in consultation".<sup>58</sup>

Time and again the Dutch asked Britain for a pledge of support, and time and again, Britain hedged.<sup>59</sup> The British had sound reasons to hedge: they were too weak in naval forces to give pledges to anyone, yet the reality was that any attack on the Dutch East Indies would so endanger Singapore that Britain would have to fight.

Yet, as Churchill minuted, "we are in no position to declare war on Japan without the United States being on our side".<sup>60</sup> On this issue at least, Churchill had the full support of his service advisers in London who had repeatedly stated that there should be no British commitment to the Dutch unless the United States was willing to take a similar stand.<sup>61</sup> There was not, however, complete unanimity on the British stance within the War Cabinet. Eden had strong feelings about appeasement and loyalty to Britain's allies, and continuously asked for a firm commitment to the Dutch. And he was supported by the C-in-C's in the Far East.<sup>62</sup>

The Netherlands East Indies was not the only area which was regarded as a vital British interest. Siam, bordering on Malaya, might provide the Japanese with a back-door entry. Should the British go to war if the Japanese moved into that nation? The problem was examined by the J.P.S.C. in early July,<sup>63</sup> and they did not recommend going to war if Japan attacked Siam. But they advised that some measures had to





be taken to strengthen British defences in the Far East.

Churchill agreed that Japanese moves southwards were seriously menacing British interests, but he said that "further preparation in the Far East should be taken so far as they are possible without condemning us to misfortune in other theatres". He instructed the C.O.S. to examine the possibility of forming a Far Eastern fleet.<sup>64</sup>

On July 20, the J.P.S.C. submitted their report to the C.O.S.<sup>65</sup> They said that the former plan to move Force H from Gibraltar to the Far East was no longer feasible, as the Battleship Renown of Force H was going into dry dock for refit. However, if the four American battleships entered the Atlantic, the Admiralty could send four R Class Battleships to the Indian Ocean. This might act as a warning to Japan concerning British determination to protect its interests. Furthermore, the four ships would be the nucleus of a larger Far Eastern fleet. But as the Joint Planners made clear, there were few ships to spare for the Far East. This gloomy summary of the <sup>paucity</sup> ~~parity~~ of British naval resources was placed before the Cabinet the next morning. That afternoon it met to discuss a British commitment to the Dutch and whether or not a Japanese entry into Siam would be cause for war.<sup>66</sup> Eden in particular pressed his colleagues to give firm assurance to the Netherlands, but failed to convince them. Churchill repeated what the Planners had written, that it was impossible to commit the Government to any course of action which might involve war with Japan without American backing, and the Admiralty was "not in a position to send an adequate fleet to the Far East".

The Cabinet, as well as the Service Chiefs, knew only too well the limits of British naval resources.<sup>67</sup> The lack



of such resources was placing a serious constraint on British diplomacy in the Far East. Unable to "show a tooth", the British had to play for time and to hope that when the moment arrived, the United States would enter the war. In Tokyo, the British could exert little influence. In Washington, British naval weakness in the Far East had brought the Americans to believe, rightly, that the defence of Britain's Imperial interests would fall on their shoulders. The Americans were unwilling to assume any part of this burden unless and until the British demonstrated their willingness to provide naval reinforcements there. It was a clear exposition of the thesis that the right arm of British diplomacy was a powerful navy.

Vice-Admiral Tom Phillips, Vice Chief, Naval Staff, placed the Admiralty's position clearly before the Defence Committee:

We have no means of protecting our trade in the Indian Ocean against Japanese raiders ... and it is a mistake to rely on American intervention. In the recent staff talks it had become clear, much to our surprise, that the American Naval Staff had their eyes riveted on the Battle of the Atlantic, and not on the position in the Far East.

We had been pressed to give assurance that in the face of a mortal threat to Australia or New Zealand, we should withdraw our battle fleet from the Middle East, and give up our position there.

It was doubtful that we could maintain communications via the Cape against enterprising Japanese action in the Indian Ocean. Our strategy was to avoid war with Japan for as long as we could afford to, until America was ready and willing to support us. <sup>68</sup>

The decision whether to warn Japan against moving into Siam, which Eden favoured, and Phillips and Pound did not, <sup>69</sup> was left to Churchill to decide.

Churchill, on the Prince of Wales, off Newfoundland, on





August 28, 1941, was meeting the President for the first time since war broke out. This historic meeting, code-named "Riviera", had the important objective of finalizing plans for joint Anglo-American strategy for the conduct of the war, should the United States come in as a belligerent. However, as the conference went on, differences between the Grand Strategies of the two nations emerged, just as they had done at the A.B.C.-1 Conference.<sup>70</sup>

The British position was outlined in a speech Churchill made to the American delegation on board U.S.S. Augusta. This tried to win American support for his programme, not previously presented, for developing a strong Allied force in the Middle East. He hoped also that a joint warning would be issued to Japan.<sup>71</sup>

On the same day, the British C.O.S.\* gave the Americans a paper on the Far East situation which repeated what the British had previously told the Americans during the A.B.C.-1 talks:<sup>72</sup> the cohesion of the British Commonwealth, the security of Imperial communications, and the necessity for Allied access to raw materials and supplies from the Far East, demanded that Singapore be made secure. The British claimed that they were making efforts to strengthen their Far Eastern defences, and ended by putting a strong plea for active American participation in the war, which "would not only make victory certain, but might also make it swift".

---

\* Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound; C.I.G.S. Sir John Dill; and C.A.S. Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal.



After reviewing the British concepts, the American chiefs were openly critical of them.<sup>73</sup> General Marshall stated that the British demands drain on American supplies for the Middle East hindered his efforts to strengthen the Philippines as a cover for the Indies and Singapore.<sup>74</sup> In retrospect, the political side of the "Riviera" conference was harmonious: the military, exactly the opposite.

During discussions between Admirals Pound and Stark, it became clear that the Americans were hesitant about sending as large a force into the North Atlantic to relieve the British as had been suggested by the A.B.C.-1 agreement. This squadron was to replace Force H, while the present American force in the Atlantic was to be augmented by two new battleships, the Washington and Carolina, when they were completed. As to the Far East, the two naval staffs still differed. Stark and Pound decided to wait for the detailed American comments on A.D.B.-2.<sup>75</sup> Churchill, on the other hand, felt he was making some progress.

Roosevelt agreed to present to the Japanese Ambassador a warning which Churchill had drafted. Couched in strong terms, it implied that the Americans might well fight, should Japan move further south or attack British or Dutch interests.<sup>77</sup>

Unfortunately, the President, when back in Washington, modified this warning at the insistence<sup>78</sup> of Secretary Hull. On August 17,

Hull told the Japanese Ambassador that:<sup>79</sup>

If the Japanese Government takes any further steps in pursuance of a policy or programme of military domination by force or threat of force on neighboring countries, the Government of the United States will be compelled to take immediately any and all steps which it may deem necessary towards safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the United States and American nationals and towards ensuring the safety and security of the United States.





While there can be little doubt that this was a strong line to take with the Japanese, and it could rightly be interpreted as a challenge, nevertheless it differed considerably from the original draft on which Churchill had pinned his hopes. Emphasis was laid on the security of the United States; there was no mention of the British Commonwealth; and there was no use of the word "war".<sup>80</sup>

The Americans, meanwhile, began detailed discussion of the "Riviera" British Staff Paper. They listed its deficiencies, particularly the lack of commitment to invade Europe, and the assignment to the Americans of protecting the British Empire. But they knew that the British were redrafting their plans to keep in line with their own conception of strategy.<sup>81</sup> In fact, Churchill had lost his bid to keep a British overall direction of the war. As the American Chiefs noted:<sup>82</sup>

The major strategic concept and the principal military operations set forth ... (in A.B.C.-1) are still sound, and should form the general guide for the conduct of a war against the Axis Powers, in which the United States is associated with the British Commonwealth.

It has already been stressed that the A.B.D. plans were disliked by the American Chiefs of Staff.<sup>83</sup> The British, therefore, redrafted the A.B.D. report to bring it into line with "political issues", such as possible causes for war and the deployment of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, were changed.<sup>84</sup> The British also suggested that a new conference be assembled to formulate more detailed plans for carrying out the new A.B.D. strategy.

In November 1941, the Americans rejected the British revised A.B.D.-2 as still not being in accord with American





policy.<sup>85</sup> Pound then wrote to Stark<sup>86</sup> that, after reviewing the naval situation, the Admiralty would be able to muster a new capital ship force for the Far East. The Prince of Wales was already en route, and two further battleships were to follow in November and December. But Sir Dudley continued:

I do not consider that either the A.B.D.-1 or A.B.D.-2 meet the new conditions (caused by the recent changes of government in Japan), and I would suggest that the need for a conference to draw up strategic operating plans for the Far East area based afresh on A.B.C.-1 has now become urgent... If you agree in principle to abandoning further discussions on A.B.D.-1 and A.B.D.-2 and to holding a fresh conference on the basis of A.B.C.-1, we can then proceed to discuss the agenda. Perhaps you would care to make proposals for this.

Stark agreed, but he thought that A.B.D. should not be revived, as "A.B.C.-1 was an adequate major directive which should be implemented by sound strategical operating plans".<sup>87</sup>

On November 5, 1941, the day that this cable came from London, Stark and Marshall submitted to the President their recommendations concerning Allied co-operation.<sup>88</sup>

In essence, these were the same as had been drawn up at the A.B.C.-1 Conference: the primary objective was the defeat of Germany, and in pursuance of that aim, war with Japan should be avoided. If this latter condition was not possible, the strategy to be employed in the Far East was to be defensive. For the first time Stark and Marshall agreed that military action should be taken against Japan if the Japanese attacked any territory or mandated territory of the United States, the British Commonwealth or the Netherlands East Indies; or if the Japanese moved forces into Thailand



to the west of 100° east or south 10° north; or into New Caledonia or the Loyalty Islands. But they were against issuing any ultimatum to Japan.<sup>89</sup>

A week later, in a message to the Admiralty, Stark agreed there was need for prompt action. He did not want the A.B.D. to be resuscitated, as A.B.C.-1 was an adequate strategic plan which should be the basis of planning between the Allied powers.<sup>90</sup> The American Chiefs of Staff then cabled London, welcoming the dispatch of naval reinforcements to the Far East, and recommending that more ships be sent.<sup>91</sup> They referred also to the air reinforcements that the United States had been sending to the Philippines, and suggested that the British increase their air strength in Malaya. They postponed the decision to reinforce the Asiatic Fleet. Finally, they proposed that Admiral Phillips, now on board Prince of Wales, on his way to take command as Naval C-in-C Far East, discuss joint plans with Admiral Hart and General MacArthur at Manila.

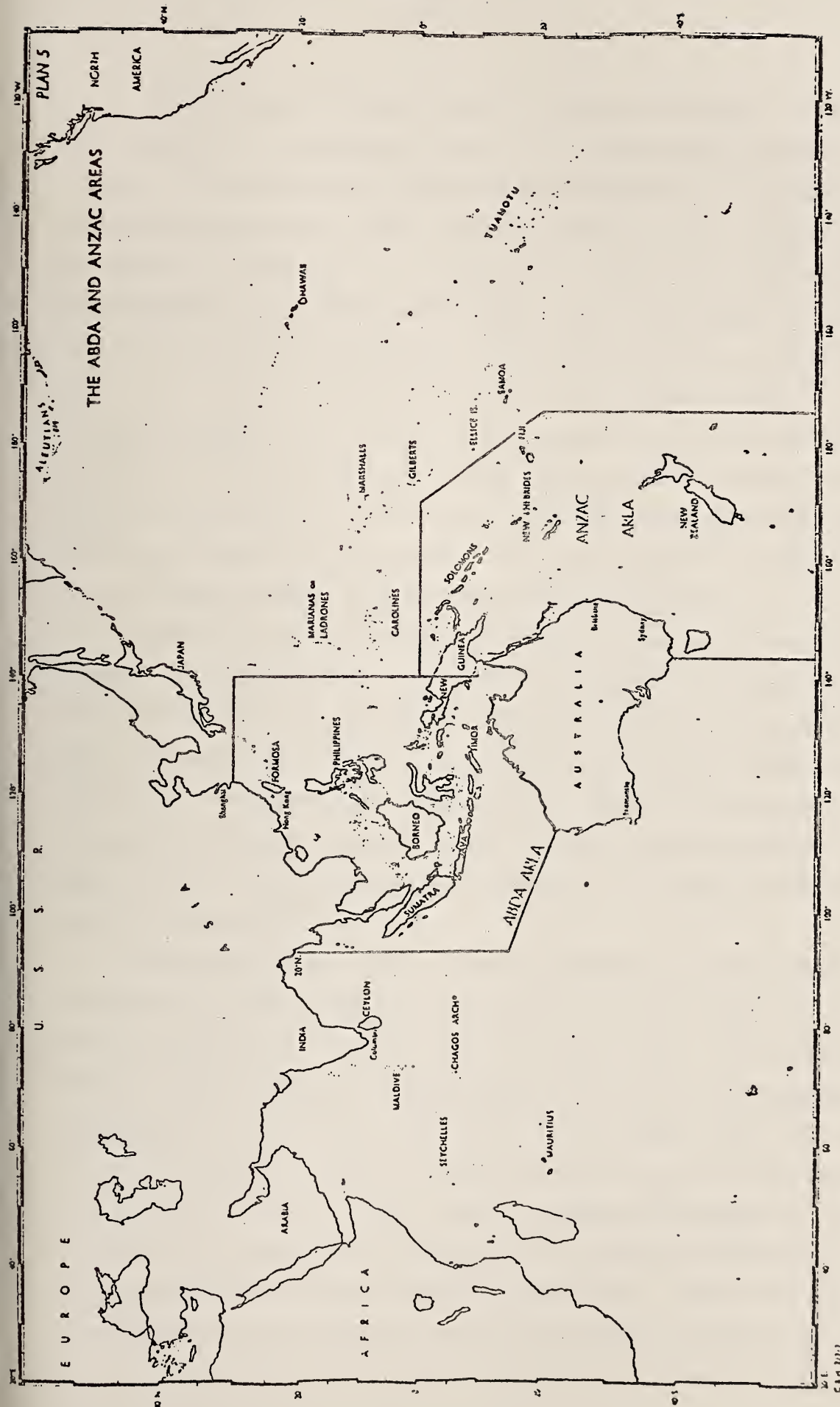
Let us leave Admiral Phillips on board Prince of Wales, and return to London where the decision to send both that ship and Repulse to the Far East had been hotly debated.<sup>92</sup>

Shortly after Churchill returned from the Riviera Conference, the Cabinet had to decide what ships they could spare for Eastern waters as their contribution to joint Anglo-American strategy.<sup>93</sup> They asked the Joint Planning Sub-Committee, who answered that if the United States Navy were going to relieve British ships in the Atlantic for the express purpose of releasing those ships for service in the Pacific, it was essential that the British muster a naval force to proceed east of Suez. Particularly, as the Planners noted, the "American naval bible, the A.B.C.-1 Plans, call for just such a move".<sup>94</sup>





# MAP IV.





Unfortunately there were few ships available, either ready for service, or already at sea. The insatiable demands of the Battle of the Atlantic had forced Churchill to lay down the policy on March 26, 1941, that no naval vessel that could not be finished in 1942 was to be built.<sup>95</sup> The First Lord submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet<sup>96</sup> about the curtailment of the heavy-ship construction programme and expressed his concern that there had been only one aircraft carrier laid down in 1940. This ship, (Indefatigable) had not been completed due to the diversion of resources to build escort ships and merchant vessels. He wanted Cabinet approval to finish the 1940 carrier and have another laid down later in the year. He also desired a complete review of the whole heavy ship construction programme.

However, in the further review of the construction programme in August 1941, the Cabinet stated that while agreeing with the necessity for heavy ships, they had to recognize that the resources of labour and material along with the more immediate demands, precluded the completion of the 1940 balanced fleet programme.<sup>97</sup> Two months later the First Lord submitted his summary of the naval situation in respect to ships on the stocks and in service.<sup>98</sup>

He pointed out that with the pressure on merchant ship building and ship repairs, there was little labour left for the naval programme. The navy had to scrap the 1938 programme of capital ships (Lion and Téméraire) as well as Conqueror and Thunderer. That left, inclusive of the three KGV's in operation, 16 capital ships, of which seven had not been modernized and were deficient in gun range, speed and armament. By the end of 1943, the Royal Navy would have 11 new or modernized capital ships against 11 German and Italian ships. Thus the margin of strength for a war against Japan depended on seven old ships



if hostilities began in 1943, and these ships were over 27 years old. As for aircraft carriers, there were four armoured ones in service. One had been laid down in 1941, (Eagle) but labour shortages had forced construction to be deferred. Four other carriers needed to be replaced. This programme had to be commenced immediately. The situation with cruisers was the same: too many old ships, too few new ones, and not enough to cover all British commitments. By 1943, the Royal Navy would have 77 cruisers, of which 19 would be over age. More important was the fact that the figure of 77 was only seven above the absolute minimum which the Admiralty had always invoked in the event of a war with Japan.

No matter how much the First Lord might struggle to obtain the large ships, and regardless of the fact that the Cabinet might agree with him; the shortages of steel, labour and gun mountings precluded building any fleet carrier between 1939 and 1942.<sup>99</sup> Additional cruisers were built and the Vanguard, as well as smaller vessels, was completed, but the balanced fleet that the Admiralty wanted never materialized. The seeds of The Ten Year Rule, and the economics of the 1930's were now bearing a bitter fruit.

This was the situation when, in August 1941, the Admiralty started to look at the problem of putting together a Far Eastern fleet. They had to face the fact that the only effective capital ships of the Home Fleet were the King George V and Prince of Wales.<sup>100</sup> In the Mediterranean Fleet, the Warspite had been seriously damaged off Crete and was in America undergoing repairs. This left Admiral Cunningham with the Queen Elizabeth, Valiant and Barham. Force H at Gibraltar had the Nelson and Renown. Five other capital ships were immobilized because of refitting. In the north Atlantic Escort Force, only the Ramillies and Revenge





were available.

With the Tirpitz almost ready, and the Italian Fleet superior to the British in the Mediterranean, the safety margin was non-existent. The Chiefs of Staff recommended that by mid-September, one battleship from the Mediterranean, either Barham or Valiant, be sent to the Far East, and that four more old, unmodernized R Class battleships should follow by the end of the year.<sup>101</sup> The first part of this proposal had not been carried out when the Arc Royal was sunk on November 14, followed by Barnham on the 25th. Shortly after, the Valiant and Queen Elizabeth, both in Alexandria harbour, were damaged. .

Aside from the scarcity of capital ships, there was a dearth of destroyers and cruisers.<sup>102</sup> No destroyer could be sent east until the Americans had actually taken over their agreed share of the Atlantic convoy escort. However, there was an old aircraft carrier, the Hermes, and possibly the Eagle, which could proceed to the Far East.

The First Sea Lord, reviewing the situation<sup>103</sup> did not want the best ships the British had to go to the Far East. The threat posed by the Tirpitz, one of the most powerful ships afloat, was ever present. If she broke out into the Atlantic, the British would need every fast modern ship they had to track her down and destroy her. Only if the Americans would send a replacement, would it be possible to send one of the K.G.V. class ships to the Far East, in addition to Nelson, Rodney, Renown and the 4R Class battleships.

The C.O.S. agreed with Pound. They realized that it was not possible to send a modern balanced fleet to the Far East of sufficient strength to meet the Japanese Navy. However, if the force was based on Ceylon, it could disrupt Japanese attacks into the Indian Ocean, at least for a while. Furthermore, the



proposed fleet would be the first stage of a build-up of British naval forces. When complete, this would provide for a fleet of seven capital ships, one aircraft carrier, ten cruisers and two dozen destroyers for the Far East, by March 1942.<sup>104</sup>

However, Churchill did not agree. On August 25, he wrote that any Eastern Fleet should be composed of the smallest number of ships - but they should be fast, modern ships to deter the Japanese from attacking the trade routes in the Indian Ocean.<sup>105</sup> He wanted a force that would act as a deterrent to further Japanese expansion. How Churchill's mind was working can be seen by his reference to the Tirpitz:<sup>106</sup>

We have only to remember all the preoccupations which are caused us by the Tirpitz - the only capital ship left to Germany against our fifteen or sixteen battleships and battlecruisers - to see what effect would be produced upon the Japanese Admiralty by the presence of a small but very powerful and fast force in eastern waters.

Churchill wanted to have this force operate in a triangle of Aden-Simonstown-Singapore; and he was against the old R Class ships, which he regarded as easy prey to the Japanese. This force would "exert a paralyzing effect upon Japanese naval action." He told Pound:

I am in principle in favour of placing a formidable fast, high-class squadron in the aforesaid triangle by the end of October, and telling both the Americans and Australians that we will do so.

On August 28, Pound replied:<sup>107</sup>

The chief difference between your suggestion and the proposed disposition is the allocation of King George V class and Nelson class. I fully appreciate the attractiveness of sending one of the King George V class to the Indian Ocean when fully worked up, but after considering this most carefully, I cannot recommend it.

None of the King George V class were worked up; their crews were largely composed of men under 21 years of age, who had never





been to sea before; and, these ships were not fitted out for tropical operations. Additional ships just were not available. Many were under repair, or refitting which was long overdue; and the same was true of carriers. Pound proposed that the distribution should be four R class for troop convoys in the Indian Ocean, and Nelson, Rodney, Renown, with Hermes and Ark Royal\*, to be stationed at Trincomali. If it was absolutely required, the Indomitable would be sent out as well.

To combat Tirpitz, Pond knew he would require all the King George V ships that were available. The dispositions he proposed were the best to achieve a homogeneous fleet in regard to speed. His object was to protect the convoy routes in the Indian Ocean and hence the ships should be based on Ceylon, not on Singapore. Pound did suggest that if the situation was favourable and war with Japan had not broken out, he would consider sending the Nelson, Rodney and Renown, plus a carrier, to Singapore to act as a deterrent. However, if war did break out, this force would have to retire to Trincomali. He also pointed out that, because of curtailments in the construction programme, no large carrier would be available until April 1942.

In his reply to Pound a day later,<sup>108</sup> Churchill repeated that the older ships would be easy victims for the Japanese. They could neither act as a deterrent nor fight a fleet action, and<sup>109</sup>

---

\* Nelson class: built 1927, displacement 33,900 tons, 9 x 16" guns, speed 32 Kts.  
Rodney (Nelson class as above).  
Hermes, converted 1924, displacement 10,850 tons, carried 15 aircraft, speed 25 Kts.  
Ark Royal, built 1938, displacement 22,000 tons, carried 60 aircraft, speed 29 Kts.



The potency of the dispositions I ventured to suggest in my minute is illustrated by the Admiralty's own extraordinary concern about the Tirpitz. Tirpitz is doing to us exactly what a K.G.V. in the Indian Ocean would do to the Japanese.

He concluded:

I must add that I cannot feel that Japan will face the combination now forming against her of the United States, Great Britain and Russia, while already preoccupied in China. It is likely we will negotiate with the United States for at least three months without making any further aggressive move or joining the Axis actively. Nothing would increase her hesitation more than the appearance of the force I mentioned and above all, a K.G.V. This might indeed be a decisive deterrent.

The two views were apart, so much so, that the whole matter was discreetly allowed to drop until mid-October. That Churchill was not ready to give in to the Admiralty is plain from a cable he sent to the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, dated August 31 <sup>110</sup>, apparently without the immediate knowledge of the War Cabinet.

As they become available, we contemplate placing a force of capital ships, including first-class units, in the triangle Aden-Singapore-Simonstown before the end of the year. All this will be without prejudice to our control of the Eastern Mediterranean. I can assure you that we are giving constant attention to all this, and you may be sure that we shall never let you down if real danger comes.

During the intervening time, Duff Cooper (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) was sent to the Far East\* to examine means of consultation and communication between the various

---

\* He was to be Resident Cabinet Minister for Far Eastern Affairs.





local authorities. He called a conference at Singapore for September 29.

This Conference\* had before it a "Review of the situation in the Far East dated September 26".<sup>111</sup> In essence, the summary was optimistic, stating that the situation had turned against Japan, due to the more positive attitude of the United States. There was a better war situation in the Middle East. There was an alliance between Great Britain and Russia, and a virtual certainty of a joint military undertaking between the British and the Dutch. The Chiefs of Staff in the Far East<sup>112</sup> thought that

the Japanese must be uncertain whether or not Germany is going to bring Russia to terms before the winter. Even if Russia collapsed, the time which would elapse before the Japanese could disengage from the North would be considerable. As the weather in the South China Sea area between November and February inclusive is bad, it is highly improbable that Japan can be contemplating war in the south for some months.

Japan is now concentrating her forces against the Russians and cannot suddenly change this into a concentration in the south.

By and large, the Conference accepted this view, but added that it was their "emphatic opinion" that the only real deterrent to Japanese aggression would be a British fleet stationed on Singapore. In the absence of this fleet, there

---

\* The Conference consisted of the C-in-C Far East and C-in-C China, Vice Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton; the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Shenton Thomas; the British Ambassador to China, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr; the Special Australian Envoy to the War Cabinet, Sir Earle Page, and the British Minister at Bangkok, Sir Josiah Crosby.





was little doubt that Japan would be able to move at any moment she selected.

Thus the case of the battleships arose once more, and this time it could not be left in abeyance.<sup>113</sup> The Foreign Office pointed out that there was ominous news from Japan, where the Konoye Cabinet had fallen, and General Tojo had taken over the reins of government. They asked that the dispatch of capital ship reinforcements be discussed at the next meeting of the Defence Committee, to be held on October 17.<sup>114</sup>

The Committee also had before them the V.C.N.S. memorandum of Future Naval Strategy,<sup>115</sup> which repeated in large measure what Pound had previously told Churchill: that the shortage of heavy ships, carriers and light units prevented sending a balanced fleet to the Far East capable of disputing command of the South China Seas. Little hope was placed on any forward policy by the U.S.N., for as the V.C.N.S. noted, it was only in the Atlantic that American and British naval policy were identical, and where Britain could receive direct American naval support. In the Far East, the defence of the Indian Ocean was a British responsibility, as was Singapore. While carefully bringing out British weakness, the memorandum also pointed out the Imperial responsibilities of Britain:

If a real threat to Australia or New Zealand arises, we must implement our pledges and proceed with a fleet to their aid. The Indian Ocean is close to the Atlantic in importance, and it is threatened by naval forces greater than in the Atlantic ... moreover the consequences to Imperial unity of a Japanese attack on Australia or New Zealand unopposed by a strong British fleet are incalculable.

When the Defence Committee met,<sup>116</sup> it was Churchill, supported by Eden, who argued for the dispatch of the Prince



of Wales to Singapore. Churchill thought that the sending of the older capital ships to the Far East would accomplish little. Too weak to fight the Japanese, and too slow to run away, was his assessment. And he always held to the belief that the Prince of Wales, with her speed and gun-power, ranging the vast tracts of the Pacific, would be a serious threat to the Japanese. Again, he stressed how the Tirpitz dislocated all strategy in European waters.

Phillips, V.C.N.S. and Commander-designate of the Far Eastern fleet, and Alexander, the First Lord, opposed Churchill. Alexander said that the analogy with the Tirpitz did not hold in the Far East, for there, the Japanese would be attacking British shipping, rather than the Prince of Wales raiding Japanese sea-borne trade. Phillips took the position that the Japanese Fleet was a mixture of old and new types of ship; the older Japanese ships being inferior to the British R Class.<sup>117</sup> If the British fleet had the Rodney, Renown and Nelson, plus the four R Class, maneuvering under shore-based air cover, they would be a match for any Japanese forces that could be brought to bear against them. Against Phillips were Attlee and Eden. Both stressed the political importance of having a new fast battleship in the Far East. Attlee said that this would have a greater effect on the Dominions than a force of older ships. Churchill summed up, saying that as the Committee was strongly in favour of the proposal, he "hoped that the Admiralty would not oppose this suggestion". For the moment, the decision was not final. It was to be discussed again on October 20.

Meanwhile, the C.O.S. quickly prepared a further report on future naval strategy. This strongly argued against the sending of the Prince of Wales to the Far East.<sup>118</sup> Pointing





out that Gneisenau and Scharnhorst were not out of action and were likely to move into the Atlantic, they could not recommend any depletion of capital ship forces from that theatre. Nor could they agree to withdrawing any forces from the Eastern or Western Mediterranean. As there has been no concerted American-British naval plan, and as there was no chance at present to send a balanced fleet to the Far East, capital ships should not be sent there. The C.O.S. pointed out the inter-relationship between the Middle East and Far East; if operation "Crusader"\* was successful, then land and air reinforcements could be sent to the Far East. Furthermore, if ships were to be withdrawn from the Eastern Mediterranean, then an air-striking force would have to be sent to help take the strain off the Navy in controlling the sea passage from Italy to North Africa. They suggested that the fleet that was required should consist of four carriers and nine capital ships. These were obviously not immediately available, but it was hoped that they might be assembled at a later date. In the interim, the defences at Trincomali should be increased, as should the land and air defences of Malaya. Diego Garcia should be seized as an advanced base along with Diego Suarez, and Australian bases should be examined as possible stations for the fleet.

Our position in Malaya is very serious: we have no balanced fleet in Far Eastern waters, our air forces are meagre, our land forces heavily outnumbered ... It is of the greatest importance to hold Singapore.

When the Defence Committee met the same day,<sup>119</sup> Churchill

---

\* General Sir Claude Auchinleck's campaign against the German-Italian forces in the western desert which started November 18.



once again brought forth his arguments for the sending of the Prince of Wales east, with particular emphasis laid on its deterrent effect on Japanese plans.<sup>120</sup>

Pound spoke just as forcefully against the move, repeating in part the C.O.S. review, and adding that one fast ship could not deter a Japanese move south, for they could deploy four capital ships to escort any convoy to give cover against the Prince of Wales. What would deter the Japanese, Pound argued, was a force of the R Class ships plus Rodney and Nelson. To cover against that force, the Japanese would have to detach the greatest part of their fleet and thus uncover Japan. The implication of Pound's idea was that the U.S.N. could then strike north against the Japanese homeland. Churchill's assessment was that he felt that the greatest danger was not a Japanese attack on Malaya, but Japanese attacks on British trade by their battle cruisers, and that the only way to "induce fear in the Japanese would be the presence in Eastern waters of a fast striking force".

It was Eden who expressed the basic reason for sending the ships.

As he understood it, the question was not whether the R Class battleships should be sent, but whether the Prince of Wales should go instead of the Rodney. From the political point of view, there was no doubt as to the value of our sending a really modern ship at the present time. The weakness in our political position at present, was that the Japanese were not faced with the certainty that the United States and ourselves would act, if, for example, they went into Thailand or attacked Russia.

And the political factor weighed heavily. Australia had never ceased to demand some major British naval presence in the Far East, and the Americans had complained that the British did



not appear willing to reinforce their naval forces around Singapore.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, the Defence Committee had before them the speech which had been made by Curtin to the Australian Parliament.<sup>122</sup>

Australia cannot afford the battle to go against us in circumstances that precluded the subsequent movement of the Mediterranean Fleet into the Indian Ocean... for in that event, Singapore, instead of being a bastion for Australia, would become merely a service station for the enemy.

John Curtin had, since October 8, been head of a Labour Government. He had already expressed doubts about British leadership, and demanded the removal of Australian forces from Tobruk and that a first class British battleship be sent to the Pacific.<sup>123</sup> Thus it was not surprising that "political considerations" won the day.<sup>124</sup>

As the views of Churchill and Pound were so divergent, a compromise was found: the Prince of Wales would sail for Cape Town, and once there, her final destination would be decided. The Admiralty told all British naval commands that the ship was sailing for Singapore.<sup>125</sup> On October 25, Churchill cabled the Pacific Dominions that<sup>126</sup>

in order to further deter Japan, we are sending forthwith our newest battleship, the Prince of Wales, to join Repulse in the Indian Ocean. This is done in spite of protests from the Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, and is a serious risk for us to run. Prince of Wales will be noted at Cape Town quite soon. In addition, the four R battleships are being moved, as they become ready, to Eastern waters.

In my view, Prince of Wales will be the best possible deterrent, and every effort will be made to spare her permanently. I must, however, make it clear that movements of Prince





of Wales must be reviewed when she is at Cape Town, because of Tirpitz breaking out and other operational possibilities before Duke of York is ready in December.

Churchill agreed to allow Pound to review the situation when the Prince of Wales reached Cape Town.<sup>127</sup>

As the long, grey ship headed out to sea on October 25, she had on board the new C-in-C Far East, Admiral Sir Tom Phillips,<sup>128</sup> who had no doubt that he and the battleship were heading for Singapore.<sup>129</sup> In fact, as Roskill notes,<sup>130</sup> there is no record of any reappraisal of her destination even taking place once she got to Cape Town.

On November 3,<sup>131</sup> the War Cabinet met to discuss Eden's proposal to give the Dutch a firm commitment to come to their aid if Japan attacked. This was turned down by the Cabinet, as Churchill stressed that without American support, Britain was in no position to take the lead.

Our policy in the Far East should be to persuade the United States to cover our weak position in that area ... We should not run the risk of finding ourselves at war with Japan without American support.

The draft of a cable to the President, was discussed. The object was to try to entice Roosevelt to give a clear warning to Japan and a firm commitment to the British and the Dutch. In addition, the Cabinet approved that Churchill or the Prime Minister of Australia should make a public statement about British naval dispositions in the Far East. In this fashion, Australia was given encouragement that Britain was doing something east of Suez.



As events were to show, what Britain "was doing east of Suez" was too little, too late. Unknown to the Admiralty or to Phillips, the two great ships, symbols of British might and majesty, were to signal the final demise of British power in Asia.





FOOTNOTES

1. I.M.T.F.E., Record, pp. 6430-34.
2. Ibid., p. 6455.
3. Ibid., p. 6461-63.
4. Ibid., p. 6463-43.
5. Ibid., p. 6478-79.
6. Nazi-Soviet Relationships, 1939-1941, Washington, 1948, p. 287, 294, 313-5.
7. I.M.T.N. Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. 1, pp. 847-9.
8. Ibid., pp. 966-67. The talks were known to the British and the C-in-C, F.E. wanted to know if he should get ready for an attack. See F.E. Tele 16735 C-in-C F.E. G.H.Q. F.E. 163/2, 14/03/41, in J.P.(41)207(S), 15/03/41, Cab. 84/28.
9. Weizacker, Memoirs, Op. Cit., pp. 249-50.
10. I.W.C.T.F.E. Record, p. 6477.
11. A. Martienssen, Op. Cit., pp. 102-3. Though Hitler also stated he would not hesitate to expand the war either against the U.S.S.R. or the U.S.A., N.S.R., p. 315. For Raeder's view, see Naval Staff History, Vol. 1, pp. 30-31. Hitler's order 05/03/41 to attack, signed by Keitel, Chief of O.K.O., said to attack Russia would induce Japan to attack Singapore, to tie the U.K. down and shift U.S. power to the Pacific. See F.H. Hinsley, Hitler's Strategy, London, 1951, p. 178. Japan, however, would not be told. Ibid., pp. 181-82.
12. N.S.R., p. 316. Also Shigemitsu, Op. Cit., p. 211., who says Matsuoka was forbidden even to discuss an attack on Singapore with the Germans.



13. Matsuoka carried on these conversations against the wishes of the Germans, who had informed him that they would not be pleased by such moves on his part, while he proceeded across Russia to Britain. German-Japanese Relations, 1937-45, p. 38.
14. I.W.C.T.F.E., Record, pp. 10022-23.
15. On July 2, the Liaison Conference decided on an advance into Indo-China and Siam even at the risk of war.
16. Ibid., pp. 10034-5.
17. J.P.(41) 4/4/41, Cab. 84/29, also J.P.(41)263(S), 5/4/41. Cab. 84/29, and J.P.(41)284, 9/4/41, Cab. 84/29; J.P.(41) 288, 13/4/41, Cab. 84/29, and Case 82/9, Adm. 199/1232.
18. See also Com. 31(41), 24/3/41, Cab. 64/18.
19. This of course before the desperate evacuation of Greece and Crete with subsequent heavy losses to the Royal Navy. It should be noted that Roskill infers a lack of appreciation in London of what the Navy was facing in the Mediterranean. Roskill, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, pp. 443-449.
20. Just how effective Force H was in supporting the Atlantic was demonstrated during the Bismark Hunt when it was used in the Atlantic.
21. Adm. to C-in-C China, No. 666, 1848/4/4 in J.P.(41)289, 14/4/41.
22. C.O.S.(41)387, Cab. 80/28.
23. The report also outlined plans for subversive activities, sabotage and corruption in Japan and Japanese occupied territories. This was a favourite British theme which they emphasized to the Americans in their strategy for Europe.
24. It is interesting that the C-in-C China was asked not to press the American representative as regards the Pacific Fleet, as the "Americans are doing so much for us at present". Tele No. 2345, 23/4/41, to C-in-C China, from Adm. Appendix to Telegraphic summary A.D.B. Conference, 28/4/41, Cab. 84/30.



25. Agreement and Report - 27/4/41, Cab. 80/28.
26. See C.O.S.(41)208, Cab. 80/27. W.P.(41)101, 12/5/41, Cab. 66/16.
27. Sumner Welles, Seven Major Decisions, London, 1941, pp. 9708, Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., p. 324, and Sherwood, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 259, 428.
28. Churchill could point to the fact that the President had cabled him on April 11, explaining that the President had extended the American security zone to almost mid-Atlantic. In effect, it verged on American naval ships taking part in the Atlantic Battle. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 140, also Butler, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 501-2.
29. D.O.(41) 15th meeting, 4/4/41, Cab. 69/2.
30. Churchill, Vol. III, p. 248-52, Op. Cit., and D.O.(41) 18th meeting, 21/4/41, Cab. 69/8.
31. J.P.(41)474(S), 22/6/41, Cab. 84/32, and C.O.S.(41) 220th meeting, Cab. 79/12.
32. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, p. 588.
33. C.O.S.(41) 243rd meeting, Cab. 79/12.
34. Butler, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 578-9, and J.P.(41)427, 7/5/41, Cab. 84/31.
35. Butler, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 579-80. See also Sir A. Bryant, The Turn of the Tide, London, 1947, p. 277., Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, pp. 421-22.
36. Ibid., pp. 422-23. Churchill always saw Japanese sea warfare in the same context as German, i.e. raiders large and small prowling the sea routes. For some reason, he never seemed to consider the operation, or understand the 'Task Force' of aircraft carriers and use of naval aircraft.
37. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, pp. 422-423.
38. Butler, Op. Cit., pp. 580-581.





39. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, pp. 423-4. See also Richards and Saunders, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 12.
40. The inputs to the paper are found in J.P.(41)364, 10/5/41. Cab. 84/30; J.P.(41)444, 14/6/41, Cab. 84/31: The paper is in J.P.(41)477(S), 23/6/41, Cab. 84/32, and J.P.(41)592, 26/6/41, Cab. 84/33.
41. A.D.B. Conference, Report, Op. Cit.
42. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 66. Also, C.O.S.(41)274 30/4/41, Cab. 80/27.
43. C.O.S.(41)274, Op. Cit., and J.P.(41)371, 13/5/41, Cab. 84/31.
44. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 67; Watson, Op. Cit., p. 397. Also C.O.S.(41)274, Op. Cit., and J.P.(41)371, Op. Cit.
45. What has to be noted is the pressure by Mr. Hornbeck at the State Department, of Mr. Stimson, Secretary for War, to have America committed to support the British at Singapore. Ibid., p. 397. Also Langer and Gleason, Op. Cit., p. 321, 324-42. With all these conferences, the United States, though not "in", could not escape, as she was adviser and sharer of troubles and dangers and had to play her part. Feis, Op. Cit., p. 169.
46. Adm. Ghormley to C.O.S., J.P.(41)638(S), 7/8/41, Cab. 84/33. Also First Sea Lord's papers, Vol. 9. Adm. 205/9. Also Adm. Turner to Danckwerts in C.O.S.(41)414, 5/7/41, Cab. 80/29 and J.P.(41)618(S), 31/7/41, Cab. 84/33. Also see Gleam 31 and 32 in J.P.(41)621, 3/8/41, Cab. 84/23 and C.O.S.(41)387, 7/6/41, Cab. 80/28.
47. C.O.S.(41) 269th meeting, Cab. 79/14.
48. In J.P.(41)648, 9/4/41, 84/33 with British reply, and J.P.(41)638(S), 7/8/41, Cab. 84/33, C.O.S.(41)387, 7/8/41, Cab. 84/31. Also J.P.(41)621, 3/8/41, Cab. 84/33.
49. Report of visit to U.S.N. Pacific Fleet by Adm. Danckwerts and Capt. Clarke 9/4/41, in C.O.S.(41)308, 4/5/41, Cab. 80/28.



50. Adm. Tele. 00513, 11/5/41, Cab. 84/31. Also J.P.(41)565, 20/7/41, Cab. 84/33, C.O.S.(41) 249th meeting, 17/7/41, Cab. and C.O.S. 247th meeting, 16/7/41, Cab. 79/12.
51. I.W.C.T.F.E. Record, p. 3632-7. For the Japanese oil problem, see F.E.(40)33, 31/10/40. Cab. 96/1, and B.U.S. (J)(41)12, 9/2/41, Cab. 99/5.
52. Ibid., pp. 7009, 9032-3.
53. Ibid. pp. 6568.
54. J.P.(41)548(S), 15/7/41, Cab. 80/29.
55. For some Japanese comments, regarding American-British co-operation and Singapore as a menace to Japan and as an obstacle to her southern expansion, see Abend, Op. Cit., p. 312. In July, Life Magazine had an article by T. White in which he wrote that the Japanese would hit Pearl Harbour and attack Singapore overland via the west coast of Malaya. Life Magazine, 12/7/41.
56. Naval Staff History, Vol. I, p. 55.
57. W.M.(41)72, 21/7/41; W.M.(41)75, 28/7/41; and W.M.(41)76, 31/7/41. Also Dilks, Op. Cit., p. 394. Also W.N. Medlecott, The Economic Blockade, London, 1949, Vol. II, pp. 74, 105, 106, 107, 112, 120-22. Also A. Bryant, The Turn of the Tide, London, 1957, pp. 271-2. Feis, Op. Cit., p. 58-9. Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, Op. Cit., Vol. II, pp. 264-67.
58. J.P.(41)503, 1/7/41, Cab. 84/32.
59. Meeting, Bellairs with Adm. Furstner, R.N.N.; J.P.(41) 437(S), 7/6/41, Cab. 84/31; W.M.(41)75, and Note by Foreign Secretary, W.P.(41)168.
60. Minute, 18/7/41, in J.P.(41)558(S), 7/7/41, Cab. 84/33. Also C.O.S.(41) 246th meeting, 15/5/41, Cab. 79/12.
61. J.P.(41)528, 13/7/41, Cab. 84/32. Also D.O.(41) 30th meeting, Op. Cit., and J.P.(41)472(S), 30/6/41, Cab. 84/32.
62. J.P.(41)371, 13/5/41, Cab. 84/31.





63. J.P.(41)550, 15/7/41, Cab. 84/32.
64. Minute, 16/7/41, in J.P.(41)558(S), Op. Cit., and C.O.S. (41) 249th meeting, 17/7/41, Cab. 79/12.
65. J.P.(41)565, 20/7/41, Cab. 84/33.
66. W.M.(41)72, 21/7/41.
67. C.O.S.(41) 276th meeting, 5/8/41, Cab. 79/143, and C.O.S.(41)633, 7/8/41, Cab. 80/29, J.P.(41)633, 5/8/41, Cab. 84/33.
68. D.O.(41) 56th meeting, 8/8/41, Cab. 69/2.
69. See D.O.(41) 55th meeting, 7/8/41, Cab. 69/2.
70. C.O.S.(41)505, 20/8/41, Cab. 99/18.
71. Review of General Strategy, C.O.S.(R)14, Annex 1, 31/7/41, C.O.S.(41)505, Op. Cit., also C.O.S.(41)504, 20/8/41, Cab. 80/30.
72. C.O.S.(R) Annex 1, 31/7/41, in C.O.S.(41)505, Op. Cit.. Also W.P.(41)202, 10/8/41.
73. C.O.S.(41)515, 22/8/41, Cab. 80/30.
74. W.P.(41)202, 10/8/41.
75. C.O.S.(R)9, 11/8/41, Cab. 99/18.
76. W.P.(41)202, 10/8/41.
77. W.P.(41)202, 10/8/41, W.P.(41)203, 11/8/41; W.P.(41)81, 12/8/41, and "Tudor" Tele to F.O., 12/8/41, Cab. 79/55.
78. Hull, Memoirs, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 1018-1019.
79. Ibid., p. 1019-1020.
80. Kirby, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 73, also W.P.(41)220, 16/2/41.
81. C.O.S.(41) 386th meeting, Cab. 79/15. J.P.(41)951, 11/11/41, Cab. 84/36.



82. Gleam 146, 8/10/41, in Cab. 84/36. Also J.P. Bd. No. 325, J.P.(41)868(S), 15/10/41, Cab. 84/36, and J.P.(41)951, 11/11/41, Cab. 84/36.
83. J.P.(41) Op. Cit., J.P.(41)618(S) Op. Cit.
84. A.D.B.-2 in Annex 1 of J.P.(41)693, August, 1941, Cab. 84/34. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 76.
85. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 76.
86. Adm. 1559/a/5/11, Cab. 89/37.
87. Gleam 163, 5/11/41, in C.O.S.(41) 381st meeting, 10/11/41, Cab. 79/15.
88. Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 447-8.
89. C.N.O. to London, 6/11/41, in J.P.(41)971(S), 16/11/41, Cab. 84/37.
90. B.A.D. to London 1735/19/11 and B.A.D. to Adm. 2020/13/11, and B.A.D. to London 1850/11/41, in Cab. 84/37 and W.M.(41) 111, 11/11/41.
91. J.P.(41)991, 21/11/41, Cab. 84/37, also C.O.S. 397th meeting, 29/11/41, Cab. 79/15, and W.M.(41)111, 11/11/41.
92. W.P.(41)602, 10/8/41.
93. W.P.(41)664, 12/8/41.
94. J.P.(41)660(S), 12/8/41, Cab. 84/34.
95. W.P.(41)69, 26/3/41.
96. W.P.(41)88, 27/3/41.
97. W.M.(41)48, 8/5/41.
98. W.P.(41)280, 20/11/41.
99. See W.M.(40)18, 19/1/40, and W.P.(40)53, 2/3/40.



100. Unfortunately, the Prince of Wales' guns were new and untried. In her encounter with the Bismarck, five of her 10 x 14" guns had broken down. Her crew was new and not worked up. Ashe, Op. Cit., pp. 95-96. The Repulse had the same defect as the Hood, lack of armour. She was never intended to take part in a stand-up fight. Ashe, Op. Cit., pp. 10-11. (The Prince of Wales was a battleship; the Repulse a battle cruiser.)
101. J.P.(41)660(S), 12/8/41, Cab. 84/34.
102. Gill, Op. Cit., p. 637. Also, Churchill had to stop construction on four battleships in 1939 as all resources had to be put into the building of destroyers to counter the U-boats. The almost desperate shortage of escort vessels can be seen, for example, by the bases for destroyers deal, etc. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. I, pp. 464-7. Of the 9 battleships and battle cruisers available to the Royal Navy in November 1941, all but four were 25 years old. PD0325/41, 13/8/41, Adm. 199/8087.
103. PD0258/41, First Sea Lord, 20/8/41, Adm. 199/8087, and First Sea Lord's Papers, Vol. 10, Adm. 205/10, also see PD358/41, PD0385/41, PD0258/41, PD0324/41, and PD0630/41, Adm. 199/8087.
104. Roskill, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 555; also C.O.S. 286th meeting, 13/8/41, Cab. 79/13.
105. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, pp. 588-89; and P.M. to First Sea Lord, 25/8/41, First Sea Lord's Papers, Vol. X, Adm. 205/10.
106. This analogy to the Tirpitz was a bit shallow, for the German Navy was not capable of fleet action: it ignored the effect of aircraft carriers, it made no mention of the effect of air power in narrow seas, i.e. Aegean. Gill, Op. Cit., p. 444.
107. Pound to P.M., 28/8/41, First Sea Lord's Papers, Op. Cit.
108. P.M. to First Sea Lord, 29/8/41, in Ibid., also Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, p. 588.





109. There was also the Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, which were much larger than had been publicly known. To quote Gill: "There is a curious similarity between this suggestion by Mr. Churchill and that referred to earlier by Mr. Roosevelt to keep the United States' ships in the Pacific 'popping up here and there and keep the Japs guessing'. It is interesting to note that while Mr. Churchill was a former First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Roosevelt was a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Navy." Gill, Op. Cit., p. 443. For the 'popping up' episode, see Morrison, Op. Cit., pp. 56-57.
110. Tele to Aust 31/8/41. W.P.(41)212, 2/9/41.
111. C-in-C F.E. to W.O. 22/5, 30/9/41, in J.P.(41)803(S), 30/9/41, Cab. 84/35. Also J.P.(41)816, 7/10/41, Cab. 84/35.
112. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p.542. Also Martienssen, Op. Cit., p. 118. Hitler thought Japan was also going to move against the U.S.S.R. Gill, Op. Cit., p. 444.
113. C.O.S.(41) 348th meeting, 10/10/41, 79/14.
114. Roskill, Op. Cit., Chapter VI, p. 556. Memo SSFO to P.M. 16/10/41 in D.O.(41)21, 17/10.41, Cab. 69/3.
115. C.O.S.(41)277, (0), 14/10/41, Cab. 69/3.
116. D.O.(41) 65th meeting, 17/10/41, Cab. 69/2.
117. The underestimation of Japanese capabilities was always a large factor in the decision making process in respect to what forces - land, sea and air - were required to stop a Japanese attack. As early as 1938, the D.N.I. was calculating reports of Japanese military efficiency. One report, based on a summary by General Von Falkenhausen, stated that "the Japanese Army is incapable of beating any European Army in the field, with the exception of the Italian". N.I.D. 896/38, 19/9/38, Adm. 1/9587.
118. C.O.S.(41)280, (0) 20/10/41, Cab. 69/3.
119. D.O.(41) 66th meeting, 10/10/41, Cab. 69/8.



120. As Churchill wrote to Stalin: "With the object of keeping Japan quiet, we are sending our latest battleship, Prince of Wales, which can catch and kill any Japanese ship, into the Indian Ocean and are building up a powerful battle squadron there. I am urging President Roosevelt to increase his pressure on the Japanese and keep them frightened so that the Vladivostok route will not be blocked." Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, p. 528, dated 4/11/41. Churchill regarded the presence of the two ships at Singapore more as a deterrent than as a fighting force.
121. See Tele to Joint Staff Washington, 0337/22/9/41, Cab. 84/36, and W.P.(41)254, 31/10/41.
122. Tele 118, 14/8/41, in W.P.(41)106, 27/10/41.
123. Tele 686, 24/10/41 in W.M.(41)106, 27/10/41.
124. Churchill's feeling of the mystique of great ships: "most ordinary people feel something of it when they look at a monster ship of war - or rather, felt something of it ... most ordinary people feel something of it, a lot of people feel it strongly and people connected with the sea can feel it as an emotion almost as strong as physical love." Churchill's reaction to battleships - complex, obsession, fetish, call it what you like, was of this order. It over-rode all reason and flouted all logical consideration. It ended in disaster. Capt. R. Grenfell, Main Fleet to Singapore, London, 1952.
125. On October 10, Admiral Cunningham had been informed of possible redistribution of British naval forces to the Far East. The Prime Minister had minuted the First Sea Lord that no redistributions were to take place without his authority or that of the Defence Committee. Roskill, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 557.
126. W.M.(41)106, 27/10/41.
127. P.M. to First Sea Lord, 1/11/41, First Lord's Papers, Op. Cit.





128. It is a matter of conjecture if Admiral Phillips was the man to command Force G, for he had not taken part in any fleet actions for over two years, as he had been Deputy and later Vice Chief of Naval Staff at the Admiralty. His sea experience was on destroyers and to quote one officer whose name cannot be mentioned, he was a "hell for leather" destroyer man, good in tactics, bad in strategy and who under-estimated the effect of air power. He was Commodore (D) and later Rear Admiral (D) and had no war experience under modern conditions. See also Gill, Op. Cit., p. 445.
129. Adm. 1648/2 of 21/10/41, Adm. 199/1149. Roskill, Vol. I, Op. Cit., p. 557.
130. Roskill, Ibid. My own research agrees with Roskill.
131. W.M.(41)108, 3/11/41.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE FINAL DAYS

At the time the decision was being made to send the Prince of Wales and Repulse to the Far East, Earle Page was travelling from Australia to take up his post as the Australian Member of the War Cabinet in London. Arriving in early November 1941, he and the High Commissioner, Bruce, prepared their assessment on the Far East. This was presented to the War Cabinet on November 5. Page\* had already been briefed at Singapore on September 29 on the state of the local defences, and presented with a review of the Far Eastern situation. At a meeting which discussed the review, it was the emphatic opinion that the only real deterrent to further Japanese aggression would be a British Fleet based on Singapore.<sup>1</sup>

At the War Cabinet, to nobody's surprise, Page said that Australia was for a strong British presence at Singapore. That way, Japan might be deterred at least for a few months allowing the Allies to build up their armed strength. He wanted to know why the present naval dispositions now being carried out by the Admiralty could not have been made sooner. He wondered why Warspite, which was damaged in the Mediterranean, could not have been repaired at Singapore, rather

---

\* Two questions emerge: was Page being used by the men on the spot, as a further lobby to get capital ships sent to Singapore? Was Cooper, as Churchill's appointed Minister of State for the Far East, using Page as a means to support Churchill's policy in respect to the Prince of Wales to the Far East?



than in the United States.\* In reply, Churchill went over what he had already told Curtin by cable: that at great risk, Prince of Wales was being sent to Singapore where it was hoped to keep her until Nelson or Rodney were ready for sea. The overall plan was to build up a force to deter Japan and to cover the sea-communications from Australia to the Middle East. Churchill repeated yet again:<sup>2</sup>

As for the safety of Australia herself, for which this country took supreme responsibility, he could not emphasize too strongly that if the question arose, then we should be prepared to abandon our position in the Middle East in order to go to her assistance.

Page reported Churchill's "promise" that same day to his Government.<sup>3</sup> At the same time Churchill told Roosevelt that:

What we need now is a deterrent of the most general and formidable character.... When we talked about this at Placentia you spoke of gaining time, and this policy has been brilliantly successful so far. But our joint embargo is steadily forcing the Japanese to decisions for peace or war.

No independent action by ourselves will deter Japan, because we are so much tied up elsewhere. But of course, we stand with you and do the utmost to back you in whatever course you choose.

What Churchill wanted was to secure from the President both that elusive warning to Japan, and full-fledged American support; particularly as Japan was threatening to move into Yunnan to cut the Burma Road. Churchill did not know that the day he sent his message to Roosevelt, the Japanese had decided that if their negotiations with the United States failed by November 25, they would make war.

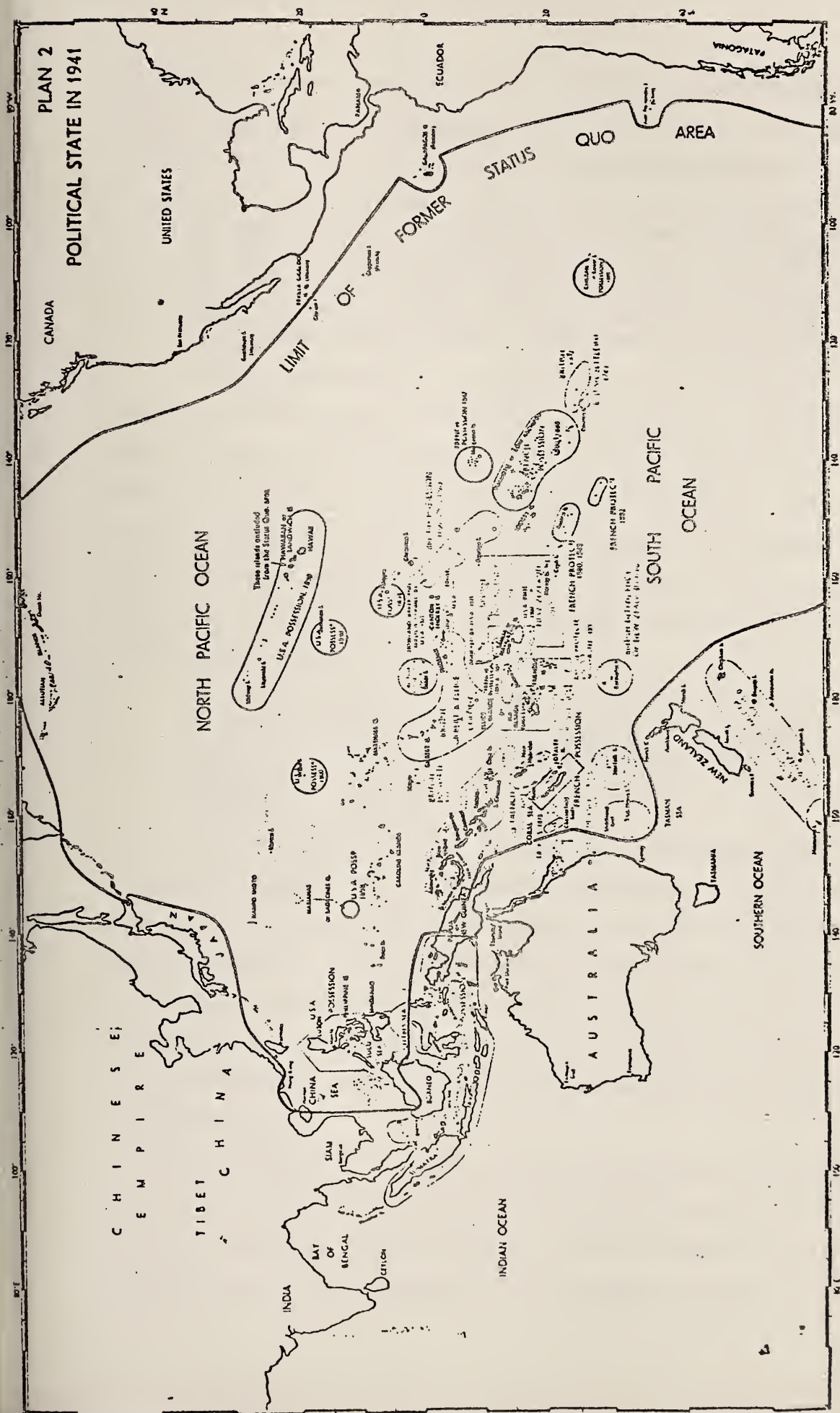
On November 6, 1941, the Admiralty signalled Phillips,

---

\* Pound told Page that Warspite was repaired in the United States as the job could be done faster.









asking his views regarding the movements of the Prince of Wales, Repulse and Revenge.<sup>4</sup> Two days later, the Admiral replied that the two ships arriving at Singapore in consort

could cause Japan concern but would be regarded by her more as a raiding force than as an attempt to form a line of battle against her. The addition of one R class might give the impression that we were trying to form a line of battle, but could only spare three ships, thus encouraging Japan.<sup>5</sup>

To the Admiralty, it was obvious that Phillips had serious doubts about the ships proceeding to Singapore. He had already said as much to the Defence Committee in October, when, as V.C.N.S., he presented the Admiralty's objections to the dispatch of the Prince of Wales to Singapore. Since he had been a participant in that meeting, it is slightly surprising that the Admiralty should have informed him on November 11, that<sup>6</sup>

owing to political reasons, the fact that our forces in the Far East were being strengthened had been publicly announced. Order Prince of Wales and Repulse to meet in Ceylon and there to proceed in company to Singapore

The Cabinet met that day, greatly disappointed about Roosevelt's non-committal reply to Churchill's telegram. The day before the Prime Minister had told an audience at the Guildhall that should America go to war against Japan, a "British declaration will follow within the hour."<sup>7</sup> Now it seemed as if America would never come into the war yet in the Far East the Japanese were becoming even more threatening.

On November 12, Page met again with the War Cabinet. He told them that "Australia felt that up to now, the importance of the situation in the Far East had not been sufficiently recognized."<sup>8</sup> He welcomed the dispatch of the two ships to





Singapore, but he pressed for increased air strength. He insisted that Australia and New Zealand would react strongly against any British policy that allowed a Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies to go unanswered. "The whole of the political changes in Australia in the past three months", Page reported, "had really resulted from the sense of danger that the menace of Japan to Thailand had brought to Australia and public opinion." Pound went to some pains to describe the naval situation and the build-up of the Far Eastern Fleet, which by January-February 1942 would consist of four R Class ships, Prince of Wales, Renown, or Repulse. He told Page that the Americans would not move their ships to Singapore, and that the defence of the Malay Barrier was a British responsibility. However, as American units took over from the British in the Atlantic, in accordance with the overall grand strategy, the Far Eastern Fleet would be strengthened. Churchill added that he did not believe that it was within Japan's power to invade Australia, but that, if the Dominion were gravely threatened, "we should cut our losses in the Middle East and move in great strength to Australia's assistance."

While this discussion was going on in London, Admiral Phillips had arrived in Cape Town. Once there, he flew to Pretoria to meet Field-Marshal Smuts. According to what reports are available, Smuts agreed with the idea of sending two fast ships to Singapore to act as a deterrent to the Japanese. He felt this should be given the utmost publicity. However, he later telegraphed London on November 18, saying that he disliked the splitting of the allied navies into two fleets, one at Hawaii and the other at Singapore, each inferior to the Japanese fleet. Should the



Japanese get belligerent, it might become a first-class disaster.<sup>9</sup> He was right.

While Churchill was over-ruling his naval staff and insisting on sending two fast capital ships to the Far East, the American planners, too, were undergoing a change of heart about strategy in eastern waters. This change hinged on the defence of the Philippines, long regarded by the British as the critical right flank of the Singapore base.<sup>10</sup> Here, the problems facing the Americans were similar to those facing the British in Malaya. For an equally long period, little had been done to strengthen the defences of the Islands.<sup>11</sup>

But, changes were coming. General Marshall wrote to the C-in-C Philippines:

As a result of the alignment of Japan with the Axis, followed by the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia, the strategic importance of the Philippines was enhanced. Reinforcement, particularly with air units, was indicated, and the assignment of a broader mission than that contained in Rainbow 5 appeared practicable.<sup>12</sup>

The development of the long-range B-17 heavy bomber allowed the Philippines to become an offensive base against the Japanese. "From being impotent to influence events in that area", Stimson wrote the President,

We suddenly find ourselves vested with the possibility of great effective power... even this imperfect threat, if not promptly called by the Japanese, bids fair to stop Japan's march to the South and secure the safety of Singapore.<sup>13</sup>

While not many of these aircraft were available, the American planners could, by scraping the barrel, build up a fair-sized bomber force in the Far East by 1942. Such a force could take the place of the strong fleet that neither



the United States, on the one hand nor the Dutch and the British Commonwealth on the other were willing to commit to the support of the Philippines.<sup>14</sup>

Reinforcing the Philippines was a matter of great strategic importance, both politically and militarily. As the War Department noted,<sup>15</sup> the strengthening of the islands would give effective help to the British and Dutch forces, and would allow the United States to exert strong diplomatic and economic pressure on Japan from the middle of December, when the Philippines Air Force would become a positive threat to Japanese operations.

The strengthening of the Philippines that had already been effected, led the American planners into a false sense of security. General Marshall felt that a Japanese attack on the Islands would be a hazardous venture for them to undertake. They were more likely to move into Siam, and he wondered what the United States would do then.<sup>16</sup>

In the interim, the negotiations between Japan and the United States were reaching a climax.<sup>17</sup> The critical issue was whether the United States would enter the war if Japan attacked Siam, Malaya or the Indies.<sup>18</sup>

During these critical days, there was a lack of real purpose within the American Cabinet and the Armed Services. At a Staff Conference on November 26,<sup>19</sup> it was felt that the Japanese would most likely move into Siam. The whole question was discussed : what instruction should be given to American commanders in the Far East if the Japanese moved over the line previously laid down as warranting American armed intervention?

Marshall thought that the United States could not ignore any Japanese convoy that might threaten American interests.





But, he pointed out, the conference had talked only in terms of the defence of the Philippines. Now the question was, what does the United States do beyond that?

While the military men were trying to come to grips with Marshall's question, Hull was telling Stimson that he had come to the point where he would tell the Japanese that he had nothing further to propose. It was now up to the Japanese negotiators in Washington to think of ways around the American-Japanese diplomatic impasse.<sup>20-19</sup>

The next day, General Marshall and Admiral Stark sent a memorandum to the President.<sup>21</sup> This was their answer to Marshall's question. They recommended that the United States go beyond a commitment to defend American interests, and accept the definition of hostile Japanese actions as defined by the A.B.D. Conference.

On the same day, a warning went out to American Commanders in the Far East, to the effect that negotiations with Japan were on the verge of breaking down and they should be prepared for sudden hostile Japanese action.<sup>22-21</sup>

On November 21, the Allies thought they knew where Japan would strike: Siam.<sup>23</sup> Even a week later, a large number of informed people in high places in both America and the United Kingdom felt that Japan would avoid a direct clash.<sup>24-23</sup> November 28 opened in Washington with meetings of the U.S. Cabinet, which agreed that if Japan invaded the Isthmus of Kra, the British would fight, and if Britain fought, the United States would have to fight alongside.<sup>25-24</sup> That same day, an intercepted Japanese message warned that the negotiations were, in fact, ended, and that Japan was on the verge of war.<sup>26-24-25</sup>

On November 29 Hull told Halifax that negotiations with Japan had virtually ceased, and that war hung over their



heads.<sup>25</sup><sup>27</sup> The United Kingdom informed Australia that there were indications that Japan was about to attack Siam.<sup>28</sup><sup>26</sup> Curtin replied that Australia would like to know what the British Commonwealth would do, regardless of what actions the Americans might take.<sup>29</sup><sup>27</sup> He did not think an attack would come until there had been a complete breakdown in the Washington talks, and then not immediately, as the Japanese Commander-in-Chief was not on his station. Curtin believed that in the event of a Japanese attack on Siam, no American support could be expected. Siam, he also stated, viewed cooperation with the United Kingdom with deep mistrust, and if the British launched a premature operation to beat the Japanese to the gun, the Thais would resist with force. Curtin wanted the British to get a definite statement of Siamese intentions.<sup>30</sup><sup>28</sup>

Churchill cabled to Roosevelt again, asking for a joint declaration to Japan to warn her that any further advances would result in the gravest consequences.<sup>31</sup><sup>29</sup> However, the President was still of the opinion that such a warning would achieve nothing, so the British as yet had no clearcut definition of American policy.

Australia was still trying to move the British Government into some kind of action. Again and again, Australia prodded Britain into taking an initiative. Churchill felt that if Britain took the lead, that would cause the Americans to look on British policy as an attempt to get the United States to save the British Empire.<sup>32</sup> On December 2, he told Eden:

If the United States declares war on Japan, we follow within the hour. If, after a reasonable interval, the United States is found to be incapable of taking any decisive action, even with our immediate support, we





will, nevertheless, although alone, make common cause with the Dutch.

On December 4, the British informed the United States that the time had come for a definite understanding with the Dutch. The Americans still made no commitment.<sup>34</sup>

In Japan, the issue of war or peace was thrashed out in a series of long and protracted meetings of the Supreme Command and the Cabinet. The Japanese were convinced that during the A.B.C. talks in Washington (of which they had some intelligence), the British had given the Americans the right to use Singapore.<sup>35</sup>

On November 2, the Japanese decided that due to the precarious position of their oil reserves, and the opinion of the Japanese Navy that it might not win the war in the South Pacific, one last attempt should be made at negotiating a settlement with the United States. If they failed, Japan would fight.<sup>36</sup> The Japanese Imperial Conference on November 5 therefore decided that if the conversations with the United States had not achieved any results by November 25, Japan should make war upon the United States and the British Commonwealth.<sup>37</sup>

As the days passed, and the Japanese and American Governments were getting into positions from which compromise would have meant appeasement, it was becoming clear that war was imminent. The U.S. Service Chiefs wanted time above all else, even if it were only a matter of days, to allow reinforcements to reach the Philippines.<sup>38</sup>

On November 27, it was agreed in Tokyo that Japan must fight. That day, the American Commanders in the Far East were warned, although in ambiguous terms, of a possible end to diplomatic relations with Japan, and to prepare for an



attack.<sup>39</sup> The moment of truth was arriving. On November 22, the Japanese Carrier Task Force assembled in the dark, cold waters of Hitokappu Wan in the Kuril Islands. Four days later, at 0900 hours, the ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy weighed anchor and headed out to sea. Their target lay 3,000 miles across the International Date Line. The plans laid down in the Order of the Day from Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, dated November 1, were to be executed on X Day. The attack on Pearl Harbor was under way.<sup>40</sup>

On December 2, Vice-Admiral Nagumo received the signal, "Climb Mount Niitaka".<sup>41</sup> Japan had decided for war.<sup>42</sup>

On December 1, Halifax met the President to discuss Siam.<sup>43</sup> That same day, New Zealand agreed with a British proposal that should a Japanese fleet approach the Kra Isthmus, British troops would move into Siam with or without Siamese approval.<sup>44</sup>

The following day, December 2, Churchill wrote to Eden:

Our settled policy is not to take forward action in advance of the United States. Except in the case of a Japanese attempt to seize the Kra Isthmus, there will be time for the United States to be squarely confronted with a new act of Japanese aggression.<sup>45</sup>

How much Churchill knew of American intentions and policy is hard to guess. It has since been shown that the American Chiefs of Staff agreed to a line being drawn regarding Siam.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the President's Cabinet was convinced that if Japan invaded Siam, Britain would fight, and thus America would be drawn in.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, on December 1, Admiral Hart, C-in-C Asiatic Fleet, was ordered to charter three small ships to carry out sea searches in the Gulf of Siam, and to report on the effectiveness of American Army and Navy reconnaissance in that region.<sup>48</sup>



In Australia, there was still uncertainty on what British policy would be in the event of a Japanese attack on Siam. The British attitude, as expressed by Churchill, was that Britain was to keep in line with the United States, and that American co-operation was more assured if Britain did not precipitate hostilities by invading Siam. Australia still wanted action with or without American assistance.<sup>49</sup> On December 2, Curtin again cabled Churchill. He said that in the case of a Japanese attack on Siam, no guarantee of armed assistance should be given to the Thais, unless the United States were pledged to help. Above all, Canberra wanted a decision.<sup>50</sup> It was not long in coming. On December 4, Halifax informed London that the President had said, if Japan moved into Siam or attacked Malaya or the East Indies, "we should all be in it together". The following day, Halifax cabled that the United States would support any British move to stop the Japanese.<sup>51</sup> The same day, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham received a message from London that the British had assurance of American armed support, should the British have to move into Siam to forestall the Japanese.<sup>52</sup>

The next day, at 11:30 a.m., air reconnaissance spotted a Japanese convoy heading into the Gulf of Siam.<sup>53</sup> At 0030 hours, on December 8, Japanese troops landed, coming to grips with the 3/17 Dogras of the 8th Indian Brigade. War had come to Malaya.<sup>54</sup> An Empire was about to fall.

While events were moving to their climax, and as diplomacy was to give way to war, the pride of the British fleet, the Prince of Wales and Repulse were on their way to their fate.

The Admiralty had never ceased to worry about Admiral





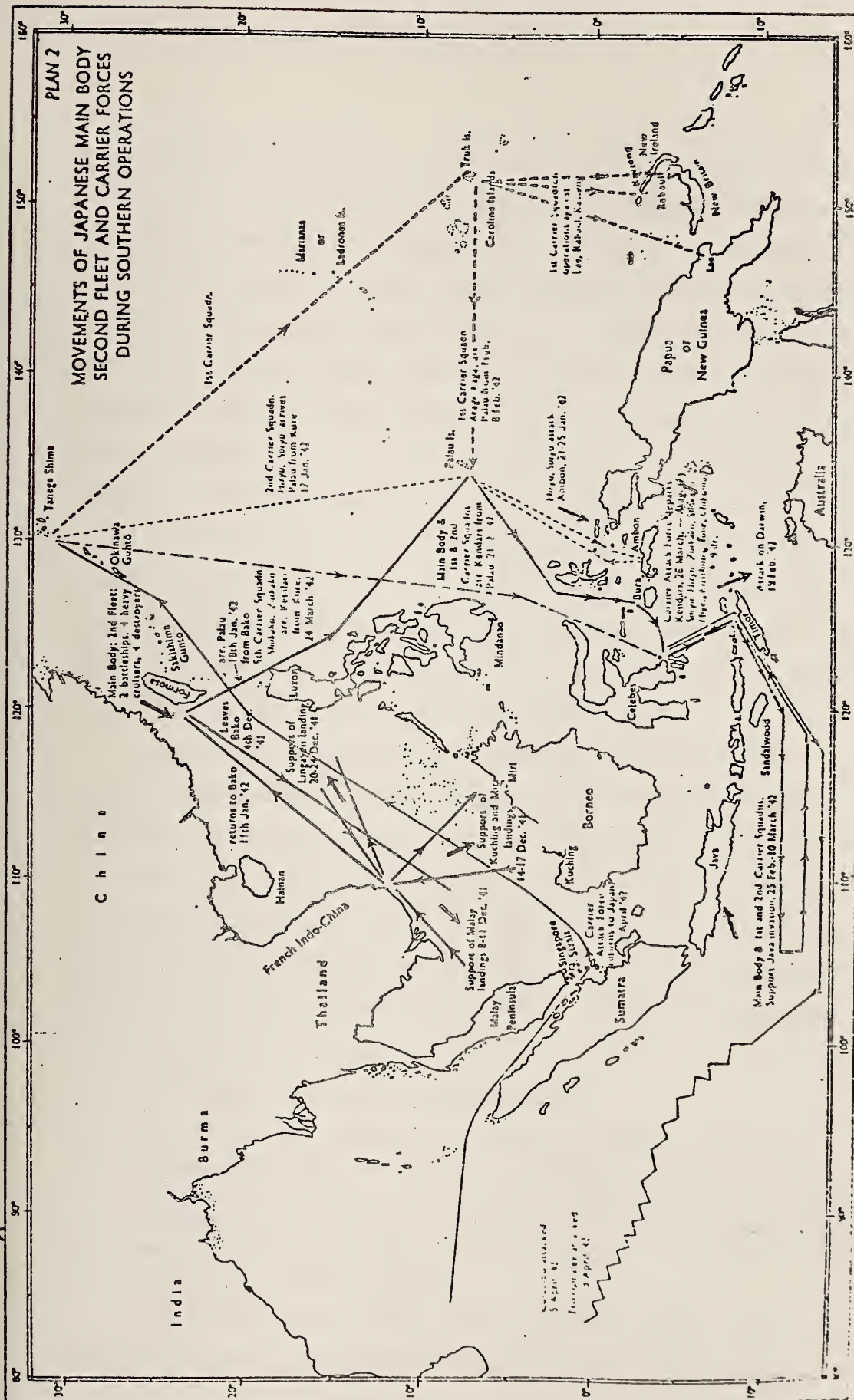
Phillips' exposed position at Singapore. On December 1, it signalled that he should send the two ships away from Singapore, "to disconcert the Japanese", but that he should remain in Singapore himself.<sup>55</sup> Two days later, after Japanese submarines were reported off Singapore, the Admiralty again told Phillips that he should ask Admiral Hart of the United States Asiatic fleet for destroyers, and to consider "getting Prince of Wales and Repulse away from Singapore to the eastwards".<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, for Phillips, he did not yet know of the breakdown of the American-Japanese negotiations, and it was this which possibly prompted him to remain with his two ships at Singapore. In any event, the Prince of Wales had to be placed in dock for the repair of defects for seven days, while remaining on 72 hours' notice to sail.

It was not the least of Phillips' problems. The aircraft carrier Indomitable, a new ship assigned to him, had run aground off Kingston, Jamaica, leaving him without any immediate air cover. There were no other carriers available. Ark Royal had been sunk in the Mediterranean on November 13, while Illustrious and Indomitable were undergoing repairs to battle damage in the United States. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Churchill agreed with the Admiralty's signal that Phillips should move away from Singapore.<sup>57</sup> On December 3, Phillips informed the Admiralty that he was planning to send Repulse with the destroyers Vampire and Tenedos to Port Darwin on a short visit on December 5.<sup>58</sup>

Phillips had already conferred with Hart at Manila, where<sup>59</sup> it was agreed that when war broke out, the initiative would lie with the Japanese. It was stressed that the Malay barrier must be held against them. They also agreed that the British



PLAN 2  
MOVEMENTS OF JAPANESE MAIN BODY  
SECOND FLEET AND CARRIER FORCES  
DURING SOUTHERN OPERATIONS







fleet would be used as a striking force against Japanese movements in the China Sea, the Dutch East Indies or through the Malay barrier. In addition, a cruiser squadron should be formed, based on eastern Borneo to cover convoys in those waters. The great importance of co-ordinating actions of the local forces with those of the U.S.N's Pacific fleet was stressed, and a time-table of the movement of the Pacific fleet westwards against the Japanese strongholds in the Pacific Islands was requested. The most important aspect of these conversations was that both Hart and Phillips agreed that Singapore was not suitable as the main base for future operations against the Japanese, and that Manila was the only viable alternative. It was planned that the British fleet would move to Manila by April 1942.

Phillips returned to Singapore on December 7. On the night of December 5, the Repulse had weighed anchor for her passage to Darwin. Just as she was under way, an R.A.F. aircraft spotted two Japanese convoys moving off Indo-China steering a westerly course. The Admiralty signalled Phillips, asking what action he would take "if it was apparent that this convoy was proceeding towards Thailand, Malaya, Borneo or the Dutch East Indies".<sup>60</sup>

Phillips replied immediately:<sup>61</sup>

If relative strength of enemy force permits, endeavour will be made to attack expedition by night or by day. If we are inferior in strength a raid will be attempted, and the air forces will attack with bombers and torpedoes in conjunction with our naval forces.

At 1100 hours, Zulu (operational) time, Phillips reported that his two ships under command would move north in a sweep to intercept the reported Japanese convoy. The Admiral had



arranged for fighter-cover for his force, now code-named Force Z, for December 10. As his ships moved from the docks in the early evening of December 8, he was told that the fighter-cover he had asked for might not be available. Late in the evening, his Chief of Staff who had been left at Singapore to act as co-ordinating officer with the air force, signalled Phillips that the R.A.F. would carry out a reconnaissance patrol 100 miles to the northwest at 0900 the following day. Phillips was also told that "fighter protection on Wednesday 10 will not, repeat, not, be possible".<sup>62</sup> Phillips was also told that large Japanese bomber forces were concentrated in South Indo-China, and possibly more were in Siam. By now, the Japanese had landed in Malaya and the battle was going badly. The northern British air-fields were being evacuated.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, Phillips decided to press on, provided that he was not sighted by enemy aircraft. This condition did not last long. On December 9, the destroyer Vampire sighted enemy aircraft. Yet Phillips believed that he would only have to deal with a hastily-organized land-based bomber force from Indo-China, not with torpedo-bombers. It was this which prompted him to attempt to surprise the Japanese convoy. Unfortunately, no Japanese convoy was found, and Phillips, who had re-evaluated the risks of air attack, started to move south.<sup>64</sup>

Later, at 2330 hours, December 9, Admiral Palliser signalled Phillips that a Japanese force was landing at Kuantan. This was not far off the track that Phillips was following on his run back to Singapore. The risks of air attack were felt to be less than the success to be gained by surprising the enemy force. When Force Z closed on Kuantan on





- 17 } ~~18~~ 18. Jones, Op. Cit., p. 305.
- 17 } ~~19~~ 19. The Japanese envoys felt that it would be wise to come to an agreement with the U.S. to allow her to concentrate in the Atlantic and allow Japan to settle the China incident. They were also worried about an Anglo-American combination against Japan, once the European war was over. Ibid., p. 305. Also M. Kato, The Lost War, New York, 1946, pp. 54-55.
- 18 20. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 450.
- 19 ~~21~~ 21. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 489.
- 20 ~~22~~ 22. ~~Beard, Ibid., p. 448-49. Also Wigmore, Op. Cit., p. 108, and Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., pp. 78-79. Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 509-10.~~
- 21 ~~23~~ 23. ~~Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 524-25. Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 507-8. On November 7, the British Ambassador warned of a Japanese willingness to fight the U.S. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 505.~~ *Beard, Op Cit, pp 524-25*
- 22 24. Sherwood, Op. Cit., Vol. 11, p. 425.
- 23 ~~25~~ 25. ~~F. Moore, With Japan's Leaders, N.Y. 1942, pp. 243-4.~~
- 23 ~~26~~ 26. ~~Beard, Op. Cit., p. 527.~~
- 24 ~~27~~ 27. Jones, Op. Cit., p. 317.
- 25 ~~28~~ 28. ~~Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 553; Beard, Op. Cit., p. 562.~~
- 22 ~~29~~ 29. ~~Teles 406/30/11/41, W.M. (41)122, 01/12/41.~~
- 22 ~~30~~ 30. ~~Aust. Tele. 762, 763, 30/11/41, W.M. (41)122, 01/12/41.~~
- 23 ~~31~~ 31. ~~Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, p. 599. W.M. (41)111, 30/11/41.~~
- 23 32. *JONES, Op. Cit, p. 317, also also Churchill, Op Cit, Vol 11, p 595-6*  
W.M. (41)122, 30/11/41. *& F. MOORE, With Japanese Leaders, N.Y. 1942, pp 243-4*
33. See Hasluck, Op. Cit., pp. 554-55.
34. D.O. (41)71, 03/12/41, 69/2, C.O.S. (41)41 (0), Meeting 02/12/41, Cab. 79/55.
35. W.M. (41)124, (4) 04/12/41, Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 555. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 542.
36. Shigemitsu, Op. Cit., pp. 250, 256-63. Also letter Japanese Historical Section, Japanese Defence College, 22/06/50.





37. I.W.C.T.F.E., p. 35690-94. The oil question is examined by J.E. Cohen, Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction, Minneapolis, 1949, pp. 134-35.
38. The Americans knew this deadline as they had broken the Japanese code. The American Chiefs were against war and asked for time. The President considered a truce for a while in the Pacific, but gave up the idea later in the month. Hull was the person who did not want to compromise. See Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 508-514. Japan was too disunited to attack. Hull, Op. Cit., ii, p. 1023. Fn. for the Japanese Conference of November 5. See Feis, Op. Cit., pp. 292-7.
39. Ibid., p. 510; Beard, Op. Cit., p. 518-9.
40. Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 510-11.
41. See Naval Staff History, Vol. 11, Chapter 11. Also appendix H for a complete list of Allied forces (naval). See Ibid., Appendix C.D.E.
42. Morison, Op. Cit., pp. 88-93. It meant attack with all forces.
43. One may well ask what was the reaction of the Germans to the Japanese attack. The first fact was that General Oshima was kept uninformed by his Government, possibly as he was known to talk too much when under the influence of alcohol. German-Japanese Relations, 1936-1945, Op. Cit., p. 41. Why did Japan not attack the Soviet Union and leave the United States in peace? The reasons were: (a) they felt that such an attack would bring in the United States anyway, and (b) the United States was the bigger block to Japanese expansion. Ibid., p. 42.
44. Roosevelt gave assurance that if Japan moved, the U.S. would enter the war. Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 542-3.
45. Wood, Op. Cit., pp. 205-6.
46. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, pp. 600-01.
47. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 510.
48. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 527.
49. Ibid., p. 530.
50. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 554.



51. Prime Minister to SSD 02/12/41. Hasluck, Op. Cit., pp. 554-55. Tele 35932 (MD10) 5/112 C.O.S.(41) 411th meeting, 07/12/41.
52. Tele 5577, 04/12/41, W.M.(41)124, 04/12/41. Cables 5651, 5653, 5654, 5656, 07/12/41 in C.O.S.(41) 411 and C.O.S.(41) 44th meeting (0), Cab. 7955.
53. Gill, Op. Cit., p. 462. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 555-56. Wood, Op. Cit., p. 206. Kirby, Op. Cit., p. 175. Sir Robert, on the 4th, asked for permission to move without asking London. Ibid., p. 175. The American official histories do not mention it. On the 6th, Australia was informed by her Minister in Washington that the President would go along with a joint Commonwealth warning to Japan regarding Thailand. Australia had made this a condition of her acceptance of a joint warning to Japan. Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 545-57. See also Wigmore, Op. Cit., p. 122.
54. Adm. 1329/7/12, 199/1149 199/1185, F.E.War.
55. Wigmore, Op. Cit., pp. 122-25.
56. Adm. 1843/1/12, Adm. 199/1149.
57. Adm. 0157/3/12, Ibid.
58. C.O.S.(41) 405th meeting, 02/12/41, Cab. 79/16.
59. C in C F.E. Fleet to Adm. 1213/3/12, Adm. 199/1149; and C in C F.E. Fleet to Adm. 0923/3/12.
60. J.P.(41)1019, 07/12/41, Cab. 84/38.
61. Adm. 1329/7/12, Adm. 199/1149.
62. C in C F.E. Fleet to Adm. 1340/7/12, Ibid.
63. C.O.S. to C in C F.E. Fleet 2253/8/12, Pts. 1, and 11. Ibid.
64. C.O.S. to C in C F.E. Fleet 2251/8/12, Ibid.
65. File 730/4742 in Ibid.
66. File 730/4742 in Ibid.
67. C.O.S.(41) 45th meeting, 09/12/41, Cab. 79/55.
68. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, p. 616.
69. C.O.S.(41) 47th meeting (0) 10/12/41, Cab. 79/55.





December 10, little was found except a few small barges. But the two British ships had been sighted by a Japanese submarine at 0315 hours.<sup>65</sup>

The Japanese, now alerted, started an intensive air search for the British ships. An air-striking force, specially trained for attacking ships, found Force Z at 1100 hours and commenced attack at 1110 hours. Repulse was hit, and before she went down, Captain W. Tennant noted that the Japanese attacks "were without doubt magnificently carried out and pressed home.... I told them (the crew) from the bridge how well they had fought the ship and wished them good luck". At 1233 hours, she rolled over and sank. Less than an hour later, the Prince of Wales was gone. Neither Captain Leach nor Admiral Phillips survived.

Even while the ships were proceeding to their destiny, Churchill was attending a hastily-convened meeting of the C.O.S.<sup>66</sup> The plan to send the two ships to join what was left of the American fleet at Pearl Harbor was discussed; however, as Churchill later wrote, "as the hour was late we decided to sleep on it and settle it next morning, what to do with Prince of Wales and Repulse".

The next morning was too late. The ships were at the bottom of the sea.<sup>67</sup> It was late evening. Churchill has recorded that "In all the war, I never received a more direct shock. The reader of these pages will realize how many efforts hopes, and plans foundered with these two ships."

Perhaps the epitaph was best summed up by a meeting of the C.O.S. the same day. As Chief of Air Staff, Air-Marshal Portal stated, "we had underestimated the efficiency of the Japanese air force", while Pound reported that the Admiralty was "moving in the direction of fighting an aircraft carrier war" in the Far East.<sup>68</sup>



FOOTNOTES.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 542.
2. W.M. (41) 109, 05/11/41.
3. Glean 714 05/11/41.
4. Adm. to SOFE, 1946/611, Adm. 199/1149.
5. S.O. Force G to Adm. 1637/8/11, Ibid.
6. Adm. to S.O. Force G 1516/11/41, Ibid.
7. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, p. 594.
8. W.M. (41)112, 12/11/41.
9. Roskill, Op. Cit., p. 558. When the Repulse arrived at Durban, Smuts, in his speech, suddenly said: "But many of you will not come back." B. Ash, Someone Had Blundered, London, 1960, p. 135, 139.
10. Naval Staff History, Vol. 1, p.4. Also A. Colbeck, The Strategic Problem of the Pacific, Brassey's Naval Annual, 1923, pp. 144-45.
11. L. Morton, The Fall of the Philippines, Op. Cit., Chap. 11.
12. Ibid., p. 439.
13. Quoted in Lt. General L. H. Brerton Diaries, New York, 1946, p. 8.
14. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., pp. 69-70.



15. W. D. P. Memo, 3/1//41, quoted in Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., p. 74, 1941. This view was also expressed in 1935. See N. Roosevelt, "Laying Down the White Man's Burden," Foreign Affairs, Vol. XIII, July, 1935, p. 684. The Japanese knew of the air reinforcements as they had started air flights over the Philippines in November, 1941. USSBS, Vol.1, p. 76.
16. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 450.
17. Jones, Op. Cit., p. 305.
18. The Japanese envoys felt that it would be wise to come to an agreement with the U.S. to allow her to concentrate in the Atlantic and allow Japan to settle the China incident. They were also worried about an Anglo-American combination against Japan, once the European war was over. Ibid., p. 305. Also M. Kato, The Lost War, New York, 1946, pp. 54-55.
19. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 450.
20. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 489.
21. Matloff and Snell, Op. Cit., pp. 78-79. Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 509-510. Beard, Ibid., p. 448-49. Also Wigmore, Op. Cit., p. 108.
22. Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 507-8. On November 7, the British Ambassador warned of a Japanese willingness to fight the U. S. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 505.
23. Sherwood, Op. Cit., Vol. 11, p. 425.
24. F. Moore, With Japan's Leaders, N.Y. 1942, pp.243-4, also Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, pp. 585-6, and Sherwood, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 316.
25. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 527.
26. Jones, Op. Cit., p. 317.
27. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 553; Beard, Op. Cit., p.562.
28. Teles 406/30/11/41, W.M. (41)111, 30/11/41.





29. Aust. Tele. 762, 763, 30/11/41, W.M. (41) 122, 01/12/41.
30. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, p. 599. W.M. (41) 111, Op. Cit.
31. W.M. (41) 122, 30/11/41.
32. See Hasluck, Op. Cit., pp. 554-55.
33. D.O. (41)71, 03/12/41, 69/2, C.O.S. (41)41 (O), Meeting 02/12/41, Cab. 79/55.
34. W.M. (41)124, (4) 04/12/41, Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 555. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 542.
35. Shigemitsu, Op. Cit., pp. 250, 256-63. Also letter Japanese Historical Section, Japanese Defense College, 22/06/50.
36. I.M.T.F.E. Record p. 35690-94. The oil question is examined by J.E. Cohen, Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction, Minneapolis, 1949, pp. 134-55.
37. The Americans knew this deadline as they had broken the Japanese code. The American Chiefs were against war and asked for time. The President considered a truce for awhile in the Pacific, but gave up the idea later in the month. Hull was the person who did not want to compromise. See Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 508-514. Hull felt Japan was too disunited to attack. Hull, Op. Cit., ii, p. 1023. Fn. for the Japanese Conference of November 5. See Feis, Op. Cit., pp. 292-7, and Jones, Op. Cit., pp. 297-8.
38. Feis, Op. Cit., p. 510; Beard, Op. Cit., p. 518-9.
39. Watson, Op. Cit., pp. 510-11.
40. See Naval Staff History, Vol. 11, Chapter 11. Also Appendix H for a complete list of Allied Forces (naval). See Ibid., Appendix C.D.E., also I.M.T.F.E. Record, p. 35706.



41. Morison, Op. Cit., pp. 88-93. It meant attack with all forces.
42. One may well ask what was the reaction of the Germans to the Japanese attack. The first fact was that General Oshima was kept uninformed by his Government, possibly as he was known to talk too much when under the influence of alcohol. German-Japanese Relations, 1936-1945, Op. Cit., p.41. Why did Japan not attack the Soviet Union and leave the United States in peace? The reasons were: (a) they felt that such an attack would bring in the United States anyway, and (b) the United States was the bigger block to Japanese expansion. Ibid., p. 42.
43. Roosevelt gave assurance that if Japan moved, the U.S. would enter the war. Beard, Op. Cit., pp.542-3.
44. Wood, Op. Cit., pp.205-6.
45. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol.111, pp. 600-01.
46. Watson, Op. Cit., p. 510.
47. Beard, Op. Cit., p. 527.
48. Ibid., p. 530.
49. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 554.
50. Prime Minister to S.S.D. 02/12/41. Hasluck, Op. Cit., pp. 554-55. Tele 35932 (MD10) 5/112 C.O.S. (41) 411th Meeting, 07/12/41.
51. Tele 5577, 04/12/41, W.M. (41) 124, 04/12/41. Cables 5651, 5653, 5654, 5656, 07/12/41 in C.O.S. (41) 411 and C.O. S. (41) 44th meeting (O), Cab. 7955.
52. Gill, Op. Cit., p. 462. Hasluck, Op. Cit., p. 555-56. Wood, Op. Cit., p. 206. Kirby, Op. Cit., p. 175. Sir Robert, on the 4th, .





asked for permission to move without asking London. Ibid., p. 175. The American official histories do not mention it. On the 6th, Australia was informed by her Minister in Washington that the President would go along with a joint Commonwealth warning to Japan regarding Thailand. Australia had made this a condition of her acceptance of a joint warning to Japan. Beard, Op. Cit., pp. 545-57. See also Wigmore, Op. Cit., p. 122.

- 53. Adm. 1329/7/12, 199/1149 and 199/1185, F.E. War.
- 54. Wigmore, Op. Cit., pp. 122-15.
- 55. Adm. 1843/1/12, Adm. 199/1149.
- 56. Adm. 0157/3/12, Ibid.
- 57. C.O.S. (41) 405th meeting, 02/12/41. Cab. 79/16.
- 58. C in C F.E. Fleet to Adm. 1213/2/12, Adm. 199/1149; and C in C F.E. Fleet to Adm. 0923/3/12.
- 59. J.P. (41) 1019, 07/12/41, Cab. 84/38.
- 60. Adm. 1329/7/12, Adm. 199/1149.
- 61. C in C F.E. Fleet to Adm. 1340/7/12, Ibid.



2. C.O.S. to C in C F.E. Fleet 2253/8/12, Pts. 1, and 11. Ibid.
3. C.O.S. to C in C F.E. Fleet 2251/8/12, Ibid.
4. File 730/4742 in Ibid.
5. File 730/4742 in Ibid.
6. C.O.S. (41) 45th meeting, 09/12/41, Cab. 79/55.
7. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. 111, p.620.
8. C.O.S. (41) 47th meeting (O) 10/12/41, Cab. 79/55.



### CONCLUSION

When the idea of building a first-class naval station at Singapore was first made public, the First Lord, L.S. Amery, said

"We are not in a position today, nor shall we be for many years to come, to put a battle fleet in the Pacific or even as far as Singapore. In all these waters, with their immense consequences to us from a strategic point of view ... we are helpless and reliant on the goodwill of a friendly and lately allied power. But no self-respecting power can afford indefinitely to be dependent on another power for its security and even existence, and it is because we wish the Navy to be free to fulfil its historic function, in order to operate freely anywhere in the world ... that the Board of Admiralty have come to the conclusion that it is essential to develop, not hastily, nor in any manner which would appear to aim to hit anyone but steadily and surely to develop a base with which we can maintain the Navy in those waters.<sup>1</sup>"

Aside from the necessity to ensure the mobility of the Fleet, other equally excellent reasons were advanced to justify a naval base at Singapore. These can be briefly summarized as: to provide a base from which an adequate fleet could secure the Indian Ocean area, including India, Ceylon, and Burma; and also the sea routes from Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia, along which, in time of war, men and raw materials, including food, would be sent to the United Kingdom and the Middle East. Apart from seaborne trade, there was the economic stake that Britain had in South-East Asia: its tin, oil and rubber holdings, plus the definite commitments and ties of sentiment that bound the United Kingdom to defend these areas against aggression. Finally, a base at Singapore





would allow Britain, if she could establish an adequate fleet there, to have a restraining influence upon Japanese designs towards Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies.

The concept of the Singapore base was in itself a dramatic shift in British naval policy and strategic planning. Initially, it possessed a certain logic. The Admiralty, looking over the international situation, could come to no other conclusion but that the two potentially hostile naval powers were Japan and the United States. In the case of the latter, the rivalry, as Roskill points out, ran high. However, the rhetoric was more impressive than the threat of conflict. In the case of Japan, the potential for armed conflict, if not immediate, was certainly a possibility. Japan's actions in China and Russia during and immediately after the First World War, suggested long-range Japanese aggression in the Pacific region.

The termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance removed the constraint on the Japanese, and, if not placing her in the category of an enemy, certainly removed her from the category of an ally. Thus, the Board of Admiralty would have been remiss in its duties had it not planned for the contingency of an Anglo-Japanese conflict. To this end, the acceptance of the one-power standard was not only to maintain naval parity with the United States, but to ensure, under the conditions prevailing at the time, that the Royal Navy would be capable of securing home waters while dispatching a fleet to the Far East.

The development of the Singapore naval base was a logical extension of this policy. Until the British had a major fleet base, the Navy could not operate in Far Eastern waters. Thus,



the concept of British Far Eastern naval policy rested on two strategic pillars: the availability of a fleet to proceed to the Far East, and the availability of a base from which it could operate.

To remove one of these pillars meant that the whole edifice would crumble. There was, of course, another alternative to ensure the mobility of the fleet: the development of the Task Force system, with its accompanying fleet train. Unfortunately, government parsimony and British traditional naval thinking caused this facet of naval warfare to be grossly underdeveloped, a fact attested to by the difficulties encountered by the British Pacific Fleet, when in 1944 it had to operate as a Task Force under American command.

The British Far Eastern War Plan was originally drawn up under the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles and the Washington naval ratio of 5:5:3. The Plan did not take into account any threat to British naval power in Europe, and only a small deterrent force was provided to secure home waters. The remainder of the British fleet was to move to the Far East to oppose the only enemy likely to threaten British interest at that time. The War Plan was continuously updated, and with the passage of time and the changing international situation, there were doubts whether the Royal Navy would actually be able to leave European waters.<sup>2</sup>

In essence, the shift in the locus of British naval policy, from the Atlantic to the Far East, a distance of over 8,000 miles from home waters, was, for the Royal Navy, unique in modern history. It was the price of empire: its cohesion, if not much of its raison d'être, depended on the implicit assumption that it would be defended by its most powerful member,





the United Kingdom. The responsibility of Empire placed upon Britain the burden of defending the Pacific Dominions, India, and other parts of the Far East. In addition, the possible threat of Japan meant that the threat to the Empire was at its periphery, not at the centre as had been historically the case. It was a policy that could be maintained only as long as Europe remained quiescent: for in the long run, the Empire could withstand losses at the periphery, but if Britain herself was defeated, then the British Commonwealth of Nations as an entity was finished, not only in political terms, but militarily as well.

This is not to imply that the naval defence of the Far Eastern Empire was founded completely on altruism. Australia, New Zealand, India and Malaya had all contributed in blood and treasure during the First World War, in a theatre of operations thousands of miles from their homelands. If the clarion call came again, and the Pacific Dominions and India were to once more dispatch troops to a foreign theatre of operations, it was incumbent upon the British to ensure that these areas would, in the final analysis, be defended from external threats from another quarter. Unfortunately, Great Britain had been, since 1900, unable to meet all comers on the high seas. The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1900 was a tacit admission that the British could not defend her interests in the Caribbean area. Two years later, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was further evidence that Britain did not have the naval power required to defend her interests both at home and in the Far East. In essence, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance placed the defence of Britain's Far Eastern Empire and the Pacific Dominions in the hands of the Japanese. Once that Alliance terminated, Britain was again without naval allies. There is little doubt that British Far Eastern naval policy, after the termination of the Alliance, was



strongly influenced by having to demonstrate to the Pacific Dominions that they would be defended against possible Japanese attack.

This obligation was acceptable more in theory than in practice. The documents suggest that for the decade 1921-1931, British politicians did not regard the possibility of an armed conflict with Japan seriously. The Cabinet was more concerned with the problems of Europe in the aftermath of the First World War, economic affairs, and disarmament, than in providing naval resources to secure the defence of the Empire. If the Navy carried out paper exercises and limited fleet maneuvers, the politicians, by the formulation of the Ten Year Rule, made it clear that the contingency of war with Japan was remote from their considerations. Furthermore, the reluctance of successive British governments during this period to complete the Singapore project added a touch of irony, for this was a unique moment in European history as there was no apparent threat to Britain preventing her from dispatching the main portion of the Royal Navy to the Far East.

Originally, the idea had been mooted to station a battle cruiser squadron there. This had been turned down. The policy that did evolve was that, should trouble occur in the Far East, a British main fleet would be sent there. The strategic thinking behind this concept had emerged in the decade before the First World War, when the O.D.C. and the C.I.D. both recommended that as long as the Royal Navy was in being and able to proceed to the Far East, the Japanese, uncertain of maintaining their naval communications over the long distance to the Pacific Dominions, would be hesitant to launch a full-scale invasion of these. In fact, this was the genesis of British Far Eastern





naval policy, and was adhered to until circumstances made it impossible to fulfil.

The evolution of British naval policy in terms of naval strength has already been alluded to. However, it is worth repeating to underline the decline in British naval resources from 1914 to 1932.

In its original form, from the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th, British naval power was based on a two-to-one margin in fighting ships over France, Britain's traditional continental enemy. In 1885, Gladstone's government set a standard of laying down two ships for every one of France's. In 1889, Campbell-Bannerman stated:

I accept the doctrine that is necessary for the country to hold supremacy of the sea ... that the test and standard of this supremacy is that the fleet should be as strong as the combined strength of any two fleets in the world.<sup>3</sup>

In reality, this margin of superiority was measured against France and Russia. In 1908, Lord Tweedmouth stated that the two-power standard meant a navy stronger than the two next strongest naval powers plus a margin of 10%.

In Cabinet councils, it was always understood that these were European powers. Before the First World War, the standard of naval power became more precise, a sixty per cent margin in capital ships over the German Fleet.<sup>4</sup> At the conclusion of it, it became imperative for the British government to reduce the expenditure of the fighting services. The Navy, as had been demonstrated, did not escape the heavy hand of the Treasury. British naval policy had to accommodate two policies: retrenchment, and maintenance of naval security. Thus much of the impetus towards naval disarmament was predicated on gaining British naval





security with a minimum of expenditure. While the Washington Treaty, therefore, can be criticized on the grounds that it reduced the Royal Navy to a shadow of the vast fleet that had mobilized in 1914, it did manage to get Britain out of an expensive naval race with the United States and allowed her naval parity with the Americans, while securing a superiority over all other European fleets together with an acceptable margin over that of Japan.

British naval policy was now termed the one-power standard. The definition of which was,

The Navy should be maintained at sufficient strength to ensure the safety of the British Empire and its sea-communications as against any other naval power.<sup>5</sup>

Under the Washington Naval Treaty, and the London Naval Treaty of 1930,<sup>6</sup> the British Government had agreed to limitations both in the number and quality of capital ships, aircraft carriers, and other types of naval vessels. In comparison with other foreign navies, the Royal Navy was not under strength. In one category, the Navy was seriously deficient: cruisers. Overall, in numbers of capital ships and aircraft carriers, the Royal Navy could accomplish its objectives according to the one-power standard. That is, that the fleet would be of sufficient strength to engage in war with any other fleet wherever situated. Since the Admiralty regarded Japan as the only possible enemy during this period, the one-power standard implied that Britain would be able to meet the Japanese Navy while maintaining security in home waters. In numerical terms, the fleet required to meet the Japanese was to consist of twelve capital ships, five aircraft carriers, forty-six cruisers and attendant destroyers, submarines and other smaller craft. The Washington Treaty and subsequent naval treaties in the decade following the First World War, by establishing the ratio in fleet units between the



United States, Great Britain, Japan France and Italy, of 5:5:3:1:5:1:5, meant that the Royal Navy, with fifteen capital ships and six aircraft carriers, could dispatch to the Far East a fleet of sufficient size to meet Japan, while retaining in home waters a fleet superior to that of either Italy or France.<sup>7</sup> At the worst, if England were engaged in war with Italy and France combined, the Royal Navy would still be in a position to send a strong force eastward to stand guard against Japan,<sup>8</sup> for

whether correct or incorrect, the belief was held in London...that maintenance in the Japanese Navy was poor; and that relative efficiency of Japan's Fleet was assessed by the Chiefs of Staff as at best eighty per cent of the British. Consequently, our margin of seven battleships over and above the six which it was essential to retain in home waters, would bring us almost to parity with the Japanese.

It is obvious that this naval policy could only remain viable if the conditions that prevailed after World War I persisted; and that there would not emerge in Europe a strong naval challenge simultaneously with Japanese aggression in the Far East.

As a corollary, it was also contingent upon no major threat developing in home waters. If such a threat did evolve, the British had to have the resources to refurbish their fleet to maintain the original policy. Unfortunately, the financial stringency imposed upon the Admiralty during the twenties and first years of the thirties, meant that British resources could not cope. It had always been a bastion of British naval strength that there existed within the United Kingdom the capability below what the Admiralty regarded as the safety limit.<sup>9</sup>





In addition to the decline in the shipbuilding industry, the run-down of the armament industry caused serious shortages in almost all areas of equipment required to bring the fleet up to fighting efficiency.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the drive for economy precluded the capital ships of the Navy from being modernized.

This is not to suggest that the Admiralty was unaware of the serious deficiencies within the fleet to meet British commitments. Prior to 1936, when the 1930 Naval Treaty was due to expire, the Admiralty had been pressing for a two-power standard fleet. This standard was designed to secure home waters against a German naval threat while enabling another fleet to be sent to the Far East. However, during the first years of the thirties, the threat of German rearmament did not register as an immediate danger, and the D.R.C. confined itself to recommending that the size of the Royal Navy should be that of a fleet able to "prevent the strongest European naval power from obtaining control of Britain's vital home terminal centers, while the Navy was making disposition for war in the Far East".<sup>11</sup>

This standard was quite modest, except that the majority of the Navy's capital ships, plus a host of smaller vessels, would be badly over-age by 1942, and would need extensive modernization or replacement. This was a cost which the Cabinet would not consider. From 1935-1939, the growing uncertainty of the international situation, the growth of the German Navy and Italian actions in the Mediterranean, forced the Admiralty to renew its demands for a larger fleet. The former D.R.C. standard proposed in 1934-35 of a capital ship strength of 15, the addition of three aircraft carriers to bring the fleet strength to eight, plus twenty cruisers and an equal increase in smaller ships, would no longer meet the demands of a potential war.



What the Admiralty now wanted was a two-power standard, and this became the strategic concept. It was to enable the British to place a fleet in eastern waters to act on the defensive, to deter any Japanese threat against British interests in the Far East, and also to enable the Royal Navy to meet the demands of a war with Germany. A vital component of this doctrine was of course the necessity to protect the territories and communications of the Empire.<sup>12</sup>

The Admiralty demanded, therefore, by 1942, a fleet of 21 capital ships, 15 aircraft carriers, 100 cruisers and an equal increase in destroyers, submarines, etc. Unfortunately, no government of the day was willing to expend such large sums of money to bring the fleet up to a two-power strength. Time and again, the Admiralty pressed for more ships, and time and again, with equal persistence the government of the day would not countenance such a large naval programme. Chancellors of the Exchequer and Ministers for the Co-ordination of Defence turned a deaf ear to Admiralty demands; financial considerations and non-interference with the normal activities of industry overrode the pressing needs for naval strength.<sup>13</sup>

It was only the Munich Crisis and the final realization that war could emerge at any moment that induced the government to finally agree to the two-power standard.<sup>14</sup> The demands of war prevented the achievement of the Admiralty's plans for a two-power standard fleet. The incessant demands for anti-submarine vessels, the grim toll of merchant-ships in the Battle of the Atlantic, the further demands on shipbuilding resources to repair and refit existing ships which suffered from enemy action and being too long at sea without overhaul, meant that the construction program had to be cut back.<sup>15</sup> In 1940, the Admiralty agreed to sacrifice that year's construction of the long term program.<sup>16</sup> Later in the same year, the C.O.S.



recommended that the long-term program be started as soon as possible.<sup>17</sup> However, these hopes were to be dashed by Churchill as Prime Minister, who, watching the daily Battle of the Atlantic reports, demanded that no naval ship that could not be completed by 1942 should be constructed.<sup>18</sup>

By the fall of 1941, the Naval Staff had to reduce their demands still further to one aircraft carrier, six cruisers and forty destroyers. Equally unfortunate was the fact that between 1939 and 1942, not one fleet carrier was laid down. Thus it emerged that the Admiralty's plans for a balanced two-power fleet were sacrificed on the altar of wartime necessity. The shortages in almost every area of material, manpower and industrial capability, were shortages that can be traced back to policies pursued during the twenties and thirties. By October 1940, only slightly more than 50% of ships that were planned to be completed within a year were completed. By the end of 1941, the rate of completing ships was far behind the Navy's operational requirements.<sup>19</sup> There were not enough ships to go around. The years of disarmament had so undermined the capabilities of the fleet that, when the test of war approached, it was largely under-equipped and still in possession of battleships which had seen action at Jutland. Every class of ship was in short supply, especially destroyers and aircraft carriers.

The Fleet Air Arm had only come again under Admiralty control in 1937, having been under the Air Ministry since 1918. The result was that the British possessed not one good naval aircraft when war broke out.<sup>20</sup> The armoured aircraft carriers and the employment of them in fleet actions in the Mediterranean showed that the R.N. knew full well how to use modern weapons and had excellent ships with fine crews. These had, nevertheless,





to fly in aircraft, which, to say the least, were not fit for modern warfare.

A good example of the impact of the economies of the thirties and the demands of war on the fleet can be shown when in March 1941, 18 months after the start of World War II, and five years from the first hesitant start of rearmament, the three British battleships engaged at the Battle of Matapan were all remnants of the Battle of Jutland,\* and in a previous cruiser action, four British cruisers shot off the entire reserve of 6" ammunition in the Eastern Mediterranean in one hour.<sup>21</sup> This was the fleet which was supposed to proceed to Singapore and meet the Japanese fleet.

It was this paucity of resources that placed British Far Eastern naval policy, or, in the wider context, British global naval strategy, into a strait-jacket, from which, as time went on, there was no escape. Reference has already been made to the demands of Imperial Defence in the Pacific area, and the thinking that went into the Singapore project that was fundamental to the overall policy of naval strategy in Far Eastern waters. From 1935 on, when Italy had become a potential enemy and no longer a benevolent neutral, the British planners were faced with a situation which they had never considered, and which the politicians had advised them not to take into account: a three-front naval war.

In home waters, the German menace was looming large. In the Mediterranean, the Italian Fleet was a very real danger, and, in Churchill's words: "The Japanese menace lay in a sinister twilight". The situation was in some ways a re-emergence of the

---

\* HMS Warspite, Barham, Valiant.



pre-1914 naval problem. This time, however, Britain did not have a major naval ally. When the Italian-Abyssinian war broke out, and it seemed that Britain could well become involved in war with Italy over the sanctions policy of the League of Nations the best advice that the C.O.S. and the Admiralty could offer was to patch up British differences with Italy and remove her from the list of potential enemies.<sup>22</sup> That crisis, leading to the concentration of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean, demonstrated that British naval resources were not sufficient. The naval threat from Italy could in 1935 be balanced by the French Fleet, but by 1940 the Italian building programme would have seen Italy's Fleet larger and more modern than that of the French. As Howard makes clear, however, it took a long time for the British to accept the responsibility of a hard alliance with France, even though, as 1939 approached, the Admiralty and the C.O.S. were coming to the conclusion that the French Fleet was needed to take up the naval 'slack' if a British Fleet had to be dispatched to the Far East.<sup>23</sup> Whether the French would have agreed to allow the Royal Navy to denude European waters of its main strength to send a force east was to remain open to question. The Admiralty, who from early 1935 had been fighting for a two-power navy, had always to contend with the rising naval power of Germany, whose naval program was given a facade of legality by the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935.<sup>24</sup> That June, the British Government had accepted a German proposal to permit, if permit is the word to use, the Nazis to build a fleet of capital ships to 35% of the R.N., and 45% of Britain's submarine tonnage.

The only beneficiary of this abortive agreement was the potential enemies of Britain.<sup>25</sup> In the words of Churchill:





What a windfall this has been to Japan. Observe what the consequences are ... face the facts: the British fleet, when this program is completed, will be largely anchored to the North Sea, that means to say the whole position in the Far East has been gravely altered to the detriment of the United States and of Great Britain and to the detriment of China.

Of course, Churchill, then a critic of the Government's defence programs, did not point out that the Anglo-German Agreement was the only means by which Britain could exercise some constraint on the build-up of the German Navy. The Treaty had been signed before Italy invaded Abyssinia, an action which made a threat to the British. Thus, a German navy of 35% of the Royal Navy in capital ships still allowed for the continuation of the British policy of sending the main fleet to Singapore. The Rhineland Crisis the following year focussed attention on the German naval threat. Unfortunately, Italy was not detached from her flirtation with Germany, and the hopes attendant of avoiding a naval war in the Mediterranean and home waters never became reality.

The naval contribution of France, on which the Admiralty placed great emphasis, at least to neutralize the Italian Fleet, ended dramatically with the surrender of France in 1940. The worst situation that the planners had envisaged, occurred: Britain was to fight alone against two naval powers with the possibility of a third, Japan, intervening when the moment seemed opportune. There was only one power that could redress the balance, and that was the United States of America. From 1938 on, the necessity for American naval support became an increasing factor in British naval planning. After 1940, the increasing contact between the military staffs of the two



nations allowed for the formulation of broad strategic plans. However, as has been noted, the British and Americans were in sharp disagreement concerning naval strategy in the Far East. No matter how much the British coaxed or cajoled, the Americans were adamant that they would not underwrite British interests in the Far East. To all intents and purposes, the American view prevailed. The Far East was relegated to a secondary theatre of operations. Regardless of this policy-decision, which was correct in seeing Germany as the main enemy, there was still a faint possibility that the British might be able to dispatch a sizeable naval force to the Far East. The Admiralty and the Chiefs of Staff felt that as long as there was a significant American fleet based at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese would be hesitant to run rampant southwards for fear of an attack by the U.S.N. on its flank. It was believed that the Japanese pre-occupation with the American fleet would allow the British to place a minimum force of capital ships in the Far East. The other option was that units of the U.S.N. would take over from British units in the Atlantic, allowing the British to transfer part of her naval forces to the Far East.

But both of these strategic plans depended on a definite commitment by the United States to enter the war, and this was not forthcoming until 48 hours before the attack on Pearl Harbor, at which time, Japanese actions had reduced all former naval strategy to ashes. The slender resources available to the Royal Navy and the uncertainty of the American posture should Japan attack led to some fundamental changes in British Far Eastern naval policy. As has been recounted, this policy moved from the posture of the dispatch of a fleet capable of meeting the Japanese at any selected moment, to one of being able to act on the



defensive while securing British communications. Finally, it was a small, fast capital ship force which would act as a deterrent to Japanese aggression. In the final analysis, strategic priorities had to be balanced against political considerations. As the war progressed, the former assumption of dispatching a fleet to Singapore, as a priority second only in importance to the defence of the United Kingdom, changed. Churchill, supported by Pound, placed the Mediterranean theatre of operations, second.<sup>26</sup>

The decision was taken to make our contribution to Russia, to try to beat Rommel, and to form a stronger front from the Levant to the Caspian. It followed from that decision that it was in our power only to make a moderate and partial provision in the Far East against the hypothetical danger of a Japanese onslaught. Sixty thousand men, indeed, were concentrated at Singapore, but priority in modern aircraft, in tanks and in anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery was accorded to the Nile Valley.

No matter how the priorities might change, however, there were still the promises that had been made to the Pacific Dominions. These promises had been reiterated in 1933, at the Imperial Conference of 1937, and at various times between 1939 and 1941. They stated that whatever the cost in the Mediterranean, the British would cut their losses there in order to send a fleet to save Australia and New Zealand.

A careful analysis of what Chamberlain and Churchill said to the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, however, reveals that although the latter considered Singapore and the defence of Australia as one and the same thing, Churchill and Chamberlain were drawing a line between an invasion of the Pacific Dominions and the defence of Singapore. Both assured the Dominions that





the Mediterranean would be sacrificed to save them at all costs - but not necessarily to save Singapore. That sacrifice was clearly intended in the event of an invasion of the Dominion or threat of same, not just a raid.<sup>27</sup>

To the end, the Dominions, particularly Australia, never grasped the subtlety of this distinction between the defence of Singapore and the defence of Australia. In Canberra, the two were the same. It can be argued that the Australians should have questioned the whole premise of British naval policy in the Far East more closely. In fact, the Australian Chiefs had pointed out the weakness in British naval policy, but their objections were overruled by the combined weight given to the Australian Naval Board and the British Chiefs of Staff. Thus, throughout the whole period, the Pacific Dominions remained convinced that a British fleet would be sent to the Far East. Nothing seems to have altered this conviction. On the other hand, scrutiny of the documents, including a British internal inquiry which examined the nature of the promises made to the Dominions over the years in respect to a fleet being dispatched to the Far East, demonstrates beyond doubt that the Dominions were not fully informed of the changes in British naval policy.<sup>28</sup> The reasons for this British "sin of omission" were obvious: to inform the Dominions that their safety could not be guaranteed by the Royal Navy would have implied that the basic foundation of the Empire - Britain's capability to defend it in total or in part - would have collapsed. Further, it would have led both the Dominions to hesitate to contribute their troops to theatres of operations thousands of miles distant from their shores, and might have caused them to look to the United States



for protection.<sup>29</sup> Finally, it might have convinced the Dominions to place emphasis on ground and air forces rather than naval strength, a policy which would have run counter to British strategic naval policy.

Just how far this "sin of omission" of information to the Dominions prevailed, can be gleaned from the fact that even after Pearl Harbor, when the Japanese fire was burning up the former British map of Asia, it took Churchill until January 19, 1942, to inform the Australian Prime Minister John Curtin, that Queen Elizabeth and Valiant had been seriously damaged by Italian frogmen at Alexandria on December 19, and Barham sunk in the Mediterranean on November 25.<sup>30</sup>

Considering the importance attached by the Pacific Dominions to the Singapore naval base, the question can be asked, was it the right base in the right place to defend the Dominions?

In fact, a glance at a map suggests it was not. The direct Japanese line to Australia skirted Singapore by well over 3,000 miles to the East. To cut Japanese communications south, the R.N. would have had to move from Singapore, north of the Dutch East Indies and between Formosa (a Japanese base) and the Philippines. The fleet would be within air striking distance from Formosa while on passage (a fact never noted by the Admiralty), and possibly through a Japanese submarine screen in the area between Cape Eugano in Luzon and Formosa. And what was to stop the Japanese basing their Fleet on Formosa and striking south at the flank of the British fleet as it moved east?

In reality, Singapore was designed not so much to protect





Australia, but to shield the sea-lines west into the Indian Ocean and south to the East Indies.

The base, assuming that it was properly defended and a fleet was available, could seriously affect Japanese plans, not towards Australia or New Zealand, but by blocking the entrance to the Persian Gulf and the Netherlands East Indies. That was Japan's Achilles heel: she imported 90% of her oil, 82% of which came from the United States. But in the event of hostilities with the Americans and the British, the only alternative source for petroleum products would be the Netherlands East Indies. It was estimated that Japanese demands for oil products in the event of war would total 4.8 million tons annually, of which 48% would be required for naval consumption, 45-46% to maintain the civilian economy, and the remainder .53 million tons, going to the Army. In fact, by 1943, the Japanese Navy and Merchant Marine were using almost 5/7ths of a total oil consumption of 7.4 million tons.<sup>31</sup>

Singapore than was the key to the Indies, not, as the British always assumed, that the Indies were the entry to Singapore. In fact, the Admiralty would have been well advised, assuming that the Island of Singapore was properly defended, to have thought not in terms of a battle-fleet steaming to Singapore, but of a strong submarine force to be permanently stationed there.

In the end, British naval policy in the Far East was compromised out of existence. It ended with Churchill's views prevailing, with the dispatch of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales to Singapore. The arguments over this have already been examined. Their dispatch summarized the British naval condition at the time, and to a large extent, Churchill's lack of appreciation, along with that of many British Service Chiefs, of



Japanese capabilities.<sup>32</sup> British Far Eastern naval policy had, by the end of 1941, been reduced to two unpalatable options. A Far Eastern fleet of six old R Class capital ships, one aircraft carrier and a minimum of escorts, a force too slow and too debilitated to compete with the Japanese, might be stationed not at Singapore, but on Ceylon in the Indian Ocean. The other option was that two fast capital ships with an aircraft carrier might be based at Singapore.

As has been noted, Churchill's views prevailed. Why they prevailed, and the arguments used by the Prime Minister, demonstrate the extent of Churchill's and to a lesser extent, the Admiralty's inability to regard the Pacific as a different kind of naval war from the Atlantic. Further, the argument over what type of fleet should be dispatched to the Far East throws into sharp relief the relationship between Churchill and his First Sea Lord, Admiral Pound. It also raises the question - did Pound have the physical and intellectual strength to stand up to Churchill over critical issues?

It will be recalled that in October 1941, the Chiefs of Staff, acting on Churchill's instructions, started to consider just what steps could be taken to reinforce the Far East. As they surveyed the naval war in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, the C.O.S. realized that there was a paucity of British naval strength. The only effective capital ships in the Atlantic were King George V and Prince of Wales. In the Mediterranean, Warspite had been damaged off Crete and was to be repaired in the United States. All that remained was Queen Elizabeth, Barham and Valiant. Force H at Gibraltar had Nelson and Renown. Malaya, Repulse and Royal Sovereign were refitting in Britain, while Rodney and Resolution were refitting in America. Finally, Ramillies and Revenge belonged to the North Atlantic escort





force, and with Tirpitz ready for sea and the Italian Fleet stronger than Admiral Cunningham's strength, there was no margin of safety. The Chiefs of Staff thus suggested that either Barham or Valiant be sent to the Far East, followed by the end of the year by four more R Class (all unmodernized) battleships. Shortly after Barham was sunk on November 25. There were no cruisers to spare, nor any fleet destroyers, and the only carrier available was the old Eagle. It was the Chiefs of Staff's contention that this force, the beginnings of the build-up of a Far Eastern fleet to be completed in early 1942, should be based on Ceylon to prevent the Japanese from disrupting the Indian Ocean convoy routes. As is now well known, Churchill did not agree with these ideas, preferring to send instead a small, powerful force of fast, modern battleships to operate in the Simonstown-Aden-Singapore triangle, which he believed would have a deterrent effect on Japanese aggression. The Prime Minister emphasized the effect the Tirpitz was having on dispositions of the Home Fleet, and suggested that a similar British force would disrupt the Japanese in the same manner. According to Churchill, the Japanese would have to deploy a large part of their capital ships' force to track down the small fast powerful British fleet. In subsequent meetings of the Defence Committee and the Chiefs of Staff, Churchill elaborated on his views - claiming that the presence of two fast powerful British ships would force the Japanese to deploy the greater part of their Fleet, and so uncover Japan to the American Navy. Churchill again stated that the ships should be stationed on Singapore. He was supported by Eden, who claimed that the presence of such a force at Singapore would deter Japan from going to war. History recalls that Churchill had his way, and the Prince of Wales and Repulse were sent to Singapore, and that,





shortly after their arrival, both were sunk.

The dispatch of Repulse and the Prince of Wales to Singapore demonstrated the flaws in the Admiralty's and Churchill's thinking concerning modern naval warfare.

In the first instance, the concept of a fast capital ship force was not a new one. Not only did the idea of stationing a battle squadron on Singapore go back to the 1920's, but it had been revised shortly after the fall of France, when the Pacific Dominions were asking London what type of fleet might be sent to the Far East. Pound, supported by the Chiefs of Staff, repeatedly maintained that one battle cruiser with an aircraft carrier would be sent to the Far East, to be stationed at Ceylon.<sup>33</sup> Their function would be to prevent Japanese raiders from operating in the Indian Ocean. In time, as the American Fleet relieved British units in the Atlantic, in accordance with the A.B.C.-1 staff talks, the fleet would be augmented by other capital ships. Both the Chiefs of Staff and the Admiralty had always stressed the need to accompany whatever capital ships were sent to the Far East with at least one aircraft carrier. Yet when the final decision came to be made, Pound was overruled by Churchill: the ships were sent to Singapore, not to Ceylon, and without any air cover. The records show that Pound accepted this decision. Indeed, the records show that he did not fight that hard against it. The problem was, as Roskill notes, Pound was not only intensely loyal to Churchill, but was dominated by him.<sup>34</sup> Though strong pressure was exerted on the First Sea Lord over sending the two ships to Singapore, there is a nagging suspicion that Pound could have been far more forceful in defending his position.

In the broader sense, the dispatch of the two ships to Singapore demonstrated the apparent underestimation of what the Japanese were capable of; and it suggests also a further inability to fully grasp what air power could do against capital



ships. One is nagged by the feeling that due to the British preoccupation with German heavy ships ranging along the convoy routes, the influence of carriers on the sea-battle was forgotten in the mists of the north Atlantic. Both in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, most of the naval confrontations were between ships within gunnery range.

The Admiralty never had to contend with a German naval air arm, or German aircraft carriers - the Germans possessed neither. Their whole experience, particularly in the Atlantic, was against German heavy units operating singly or in small groups without air support. The British never had to employ the Task Force system, or to fight far from their bases. Lacking experience in the type of naval war the Japanese were about to launch, without real knowledge of fighting a naval war over vast expanses of ocean, constantly under-rating the Japanese air arm, Churchill, and to a degree, Pound, could accept the dispatch of the Prince of Wales and Repulse to Singapore. And it is also fair to comment that even had Pound had his way and the four R Class ships, plus one carrier and two modern capital ships had proceeded to Ceylon, again disaster would have befallen the fleet, as there would still have been a dearth of air cover. Admiral Sir James Somerville found this out, when, as newly appointed Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet, his force was unable to meet the onslaught of Japanese air power.<sup>35</sup>

There is also the question whether the Prince of Wales and Repulse were the right ships to send at all. Neither ship was equipped to fight in the tropics. Both lacked proper ventilation systems, and the high temperatures and humidity reduced the fighting efficiency of the crews. According to the Medical Officer on the Prince of Wales, "I made certain representations to the Fleet Medical Officer, and put on paper the inadvisability





of employing Prince of Wales in hot climates owing to inadequate ventilation. I am of the opinion that the men were fatigued and listless and their fighting efficiency was below par." A gentle reminder that the Royal Navy, even in its most modern ships, was never fully equipped to fight in the Far East.<sup>36</sup>

In other areas the ships were deficient. The Prince of Wales' radar and guns were new and untried. In her encounter with the Bismarck, five of the Prince of Wales' ten 14" guns broke down, and her crew had not yet been worked up. Repulse suffered the same defects as the Hood - lack of armour.<sup>37</sup>

Years after the event, Churchill wrote in his History of the Second World War, that the two capital ships had been sent to Singapore to "exercise that kind of vague menæ which capital ships of the highest quality, whose whereabouts are unknown, can impose upon all hostile naval calculations ... Obviously they must go to sea and vanish among the innumerable islands."<sup>38</sup> The records show that this "vanishing idea" only emerged after Japan had attacked, and there is no recorded signal from the Admiralty to Phillips that even suggests that the ships should vanish. It is also interesting to note that after the war, the head of the Prime Minister's Office and a member of the C.O.S. Committee, General "Pug" Ismay, wrote: "Not once during the whole war did he (Churchill) overrule his military advisers on a purely military question."<sup>39</sup> General Ismay's memory seems to have failed him, as Churchill ~~generally~~ overruled his military advisers where it concerned the Far East, and particularly the sending of the Prince of Wales and Repulse to Singapore.

The other major strategic error, if it can be so called, was the persistent overestimation of the capability of the United States Fleet based on Hawaii. The Admiralty, and the Chiefs of Staff, had in their possession reports from British officers who



had visited the American Fleet; and these reports, as will be recalled, contained the American Naval Officers' own assessment of their Fleet - that it was second-rate and unable to take on the Japanese Navy. Nevertheless, the Chiefs of Staff, the Admiralty and Churchill maintained their opinions that the American Fleet would be a decisive influence, drawing off Japanese strength from the Malay Barrier.<sup>40</sup>

However, support from the American Fleet based at Pearl Harbor ended with the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. Though the American aircraft carriers escaped the onslaught, the losses sustained by the British, Dutch, Australian and American Navies in the first few months of the Pacific war, were such as to prevent a unified and coherent allied naval policy. The inability of British naval resources to meet British world-wide commitments signalled the end of Britain as a major naval power, and wrote the epitaph of Britain's Empire. The ANZUS Pact of 1951 was but a reaffirmation of this reality.



FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted in A. Hurd, "The Naval Base at Singapore: Is It Necessary?", E.R. Vol. 37, (August, 1923), pp. 864-65.
2. Naval Policy in the Event of a Far Eastern War, M06675/41, Adm. 1/9530. Also Employment of Eastern Forces in the Event of War, PD571/39, Adm. 1/9767, and Eastern War Memorandum, precis of Naval Plan, Cab. 99/8.
3. Quoted in Capt. A.C. Dewar, "Disarmament and Naval Policy", BNA, 1935, p. 67.
4. See B.B. Schonfield, British Sea Power, London, 1959, pp. 17-20. A. Marder, The Anatomy .... Op. Cit., Chapter X and Adm. The One Power Standard and Parity, p. 32, 77.
5. Observations of Getty Committee, 15/10.21, Adm. 1/8614.
6. CM02036 Treaty Series No. 5, 1924; and CM03758, Treaty Series No. 1, 1931.
7. Cab. 69/7A.
8. Naval Staff History, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 12.
9. PSO (SB)116, 28/5/30, Cab. 60/34/111, Cab. 60/40, III 420 27th April, 1934; Cab. 60/50/III, 932, 19th July 1939, Cab. 60/50/III. See also Cab. 21/371.
10. Postan, Op. Cit., pp. 7-8. PSO 557, 30/9/36; Cab. 60/16.
11. DRC 37. Also DPR 52, 21/11/35, Op. Cit.
12. C.I.D. 1215, B, Op. Cit.
13. CP30(38) 14/2/38, CP26(36) 12/2/36, CP24(38) 8/2/38.
14. DP (P)63. Discussed at 364th meeting DP(P), 6/7/39, Cab. 16/183A.





15. WP(E)(39)15, 19/9/39, WM(40)18, 19/1/40, WP(E)(40)183, 9/7/40, WM(40)254, 19/9/40, WP(40)365, 9/9/40.
16. WP(40)53, 2/3/40 and WM(40)78, 19/1/40.
17. WP(40)349, 9/10/40.
18. WP(41)69, 26/3/41.
19. Postan, Op. Cit., p. 64.
20. B. Thetford, British Naval Aircraft, 1912-1958, London 1958, pp. 22-25.
21. W.C. Pack, The Battle of Matapan, London 1961, p. 35. For the state of the fleet and the fleet air arm, see S. Roskill, The War at Sea, Op. Cit., Vol. I, Chapters III, IV.
22. C.O.S.442, 18/3/36, Cab. 53/27, and DC of S Memo, 22/4/36, Adm. 116/3042.
23. Butler, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 23; see also Howard, Op. Cit.
24. This agreement had first been proposed by Sir John Simon when in Berlin, March 24-27, 1935, to discuss the forthcoming London Naval Conference. In June, Herr von Ribbentrop led a German naval delegation to London, which resulted in the Treaty signed on June 18. See SIA, 1935, pp. 179-91.
25. Gill, Op. Cit., pp. 33-34. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. I, pp. 140-41.
26. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. IV, pp. 68-69.
27. Naval Staff History, Op. Cit., Vol. I, pp. 19-20.
28. See Cab. 21/893.
29. In the article in the Melbourne Herald, December 27, 1941, Curtin wrote: "... Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links with the United Kingdom."
30. R. Parkinson, Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat, London 1973, p. 351.
31. Oil supplies for Japan, M02915/41. Notes on Economic Warfare in the Far East, M017052/41, Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy, U.S.S.B.S., Appendix









31. (continued)  
A.B.C., Washington, N.D.
32. Churchill wrote in late 1940 that "the Naval Intelligence Branch are very much inclined to exaggerate Japanese strength and effieience". Churchill to First Lord, 15/9/40, in Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 668.
33. See C.O.S.(41)107, Cab. 80/26. Also J.P.(41)157, Cab. 84/27 and C.O.S.(41)208, Cab. 80/27. Meeting Menzies at Admiralty, 28/3/41, Cab. 99/4 and C.O.S.(41)230, Cab. 80/27.
34. S.W. Roskill, "Marder, Churchill and the Admiralty, 1939-1942", J.R.U.S.I., Vol. 117, (Dec. 1972), p. 50.
35. C-in-C F.E. War Diaries, 8136, Adm. 199/1185. And Events in the Far East: Official and Personal Records of Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, Adm. 199/1472-1477.
36. Loss of Prince of Wales and Repulse, 8087, Adm. 199/1149.
37. Information provided by Cdr. Peter Kemp and Capt. J. Mackenzie-Grieve, R.N.(Ret.). Also Ash, Op. Cit., pp. 10-11, 95-96.
38. Churchill, Op. Cit., Vol. III, p. 615.
39. General the Lord Ismay, Memoirs, London, 1960, p. 164.
40. See J.P.(41)103, Cab. 84/27. C.O.S. 46th meeting, 8/2/41, Cab. 79/9. Also Pound to P.M., 13/3/41, 00261, Adm. 205/10 and C.O.S.(41) 286th meeting, 13/8/41, Cab. 79/13.



### BIBLIOGRAPHY

This thesis is primarily based on Cabinet Documents released for public scrutiny beginning in 1972. Of particular importance were the Admiralty Files, including the First Sea Lord's Papers, which gave valuable insights concerning the Admiralty Board's views on British naval policy. Equally important for the pre-war period of the thirties, were materials covering meetings and memoranda of various sub-committees of the C.I.D. particularly: Defence Requirements, Defence Policy Requirements, and the Defence Plans Policy. I further relied on the meetings and memoranda of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Joint Planning Sub-Committee. For policy decisions, the Cabinet Minutes and Papers were of vital importance.



## PRIMARY SOURCES

Public Record Office, London.

### Admiralty Pre-1914

Adm. 1. Admiralty and Secretariat Papers.

Adm. 116. Admiralty and Secretariat Cases.

### Cabinet Files

Cab. 2. Minutes of the CID (Committee of Imperial Defence).

Cab. 5. Memoranda on Colonial Defence.

Cab. 7. Minutes of the Colonial Defence Committee (CDC).

Cab. 8. Memoranda of the CDC.

Cab. 9. Colonial and Overseas Defence Committee.

Cab. 16. CID Ad. Hoc. Committees of Inquiry.

Cab. 17. CID Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers.

Cab. 18. Miscellaneous Volumes.

CO 418 Series (Australia).

### INTERWAR PERIOD: 1919-1939

#### Admiralty

Adm. 1. Admiralty and Secretariat Papers.

Adm. 116. Admiralty and Secretariat Cases.

Adm. 167. Board of Admiralty Minutes.

Adm. 182. Admiralty Fleet Orders.

Admiralty Pink Lists

Naval Notes: Reports of Naval Attache (Tokyo), 1931-41.





Admiralty 1939-1945

- Adm. 1. Admiralty and Secretariat Papers.
- Adm. 12. Admiralty and Secretariat Indexes.
- Adm. 116. Admiralty and Secretariat Cases.
- Adm. 167. Board of Admiralty Minutes; Memoranda, etc.
- Adm. 187. War of 1939 to 1945 - Pink Lists.
- Adm. 199. War of 1939 to 1945 - War History Cases.
- Adm. 205. First Sea Lord Papers.

Cabinet Files 1919-1939

- Cab. 2. Minutes of the CID.
- Cab. 4. CID. B. Series.
- Cab. 5. CID. Memoranda on Colonial and Dominion Defence.
- Cab. 9. CID. ODC. Remarks.
- Cab. 16. CID. Ad. Hoc. Committees of Inquiry.
- Cab. 21. Registered Files.
- Cab. 24. Cabinet Conclusion and Cabinet Papers.
- Cab. 27. General Series.
- Cab. 29. Naval/Staff Conferences/International Conferences.
- Cab. 30. Washington Conferences.
- Cab. 32. Imperial Conferences.
- Cab. 36. Joint Overseas and Home Defence Committee.
- Cab. 53. Chiefs of Staff Committee. Minutes/Memoranda.
- Cab. 54. Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- Cab. 55. Joint Planning Committee.
- Cab. 60. Principal Supply Officers Committee. Minutes and Memoranda.



Cab. 64. Miscellaneous Reports.

FO 371 Series (Japan).

Cabinet Files 1939-1945

Cab. 21. Registered Files.

Cab. 66. War Cabinet Memoranda. WP(G) Series.

Cab. 68. War Cabinet Memoranda. WP(R) Series.

Cab. 69. War Cabinet Memoranda. War Cabinet. Defence Committee (Operations).

Cab. 70. War Cabinet. Defence Committee.

Cab. 71. War Cabinet. Lord President's Committees.

Cab. 78. War Cabinet Committees, MISC and GEN Series.

Cab. 79. War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Comm., Minutes of Meetings.

Cab. 80. War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Comm., Memoranda.

Cab. 81. War Cabinets, Chiefs of Staff Committees and Sub-Committees.

Cab. 82. War Cabinet, Deputy Chiefs of Staff Comm. and Sub-Committees.

Cab. 83. War Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Military Co-ordination.

Cab. 84. War Cabinet Joint Planning Committees.

Cab. 85. War Cabinet Anglo-French Committees.

Cab. 86. War Cabinet Committees on the Battle of the Atlantic and Anti-U-Boat Warfare.

Cab. 88. War Cabinet, Combined Chiefs of Staff Comm. and Sub-Committees.

Cab. 92. War Cabinet Committees on Supply, Production, Priority and Manpower.

Cab. 94. War Cabinet Overseas Defence Comm.





- Cab. 96. War Cabinet Committees on the Far East.
- Cab. 100. War Cabinet. Daily Situation Reports.
- Cab. 101. Historical Section, Official War Histories.
- Cab. 105. War Cabinet Telegrams.
- Cab. 107. War Cabinet. Co-ordination of Departmental Action in the Event of War with Certain Countries.
- Cab. 118. Various Ministers and Officials Files.
- Cab. 119. Joint Planning Staff Files.
- Cab. 120. Minister of Defence, Secretariat Files.
- Cab. 122. British Joint Services Mission, Washington Office Files.
- FO 660. War of 1939 to 1945 Ministers Resident, Etc.
- PREM 3. Operational Papers.
- FO 115 Embassy and Consular Archives, U.S.A.
- FO 414 Confidential Print, North America.
- FO 436 Confidential Print, Far East.
- FO 438 Confidential Print, War. General.
- FO 461 Confidential Print, America.

Dominions Office

- DO 35 Dominions Original Correspondence.
- DO 114 Dominions Confidential Print.
- DO 115 Australian Confidential Print.

Private Papers

- Lord Balfour Papers. British Museum.
- Robert Borden Papers. Public Archives, Ottawa.
- Austen Chamberlain. University of Birmingham.



Lord Cecil Papers. British Museum.

Adm. Sir A. B. Cunningham Papers. British Museum.

First Lord's Papers. PRO.

Lord Halifax Papers. PRO.

Lord Jellicoe Papers. British Museum.

Lt. Gen. A. E. Percival Papers. Imperial War Museum.

Command Papers 1918-1939

1920-21 CMD. 613 Naval Estimates.

1921 CMD. 1343 Navy, Distribution of the Duties of  
the Naval Staff of the Admiralty.

1922-23 CMD. 1603 Navy Estimates.

1922 CMD. 1581, 1582, 1589  
First Interim Report and Second and  
Third Reports of the Committee on  
National Expenditure.

1922 CMD. 1587 Admiralty Remarks on the Interim  
Report of the Committee on National  
Expenditure.

1923-24 CMD. 1818 Navy Estimates.

1923 CMD. 1938 Recommendations of the National and  
Imperial Defence Committee on Relations  
of the Navy and Air Force (Balfour  
Committee).

1924-25 CMD. 2029 Report of the Sub-Committee of the  
CID on National and Imperial Defence  
(Salisbury Committee).

1924-25 CMD. 2036 Treaty Between the British Empire,  
France, Italy, Japan and the U.S.A. for  
limitation of Naval Armaments.

1924-25 CMD. 2037 Treaty Between the British Empire, France,  
Italy, Japan and the U.S.A. relating to  
Insular Possessions in the Pacific.

1924-25 CMD. 2071 Navy Estimates.



1924        CMD. 2083 Singapore Naval Base.

1925        CMD. 2083 The Singapore Base Correspondence  
             with the Dominions and India.

1925        CMD. 2349 Fleets of the British Empire and  
             Foreign Countries.

1925-26    CMD. 2366 Navy Estimates.

1925        CMD. 2476 Navy, Programme of New Construction.

1926        CMD. 2590 Fleets of the British Empire and  
             Other Countries.

1926        CMD. 2595 Navy Estimates.

1926        CMD. 2649 Reports of Committee on the Amalgamation  
             of the Common Services of the Navy, Army  
             and Air Force (MOND-WEIR Committee).

1927        CMD. 2809 Fleets of the British Empire and Other  
             Countries.

1927        CMD. 2816 Navy Estimates.

1928        CMD. 3034 Fleets of the British Empire and Other  
             Countries.

1928        CMD. 3052 Navy Estimates.

1929        CMD. 3277 Fleets of the British Empire and Other  
             Countries.

1929        CMD. 3283 Navy Estimates.

1930        CMD. 3464 Fleets of the British Empire and Other  
             Countries.

1930        CMD. 3566 Navy Estimates.

1930        CMD. 3758 London Naval Treaty.

1931        CMD. 3812 Disarmament Conference.

1931        CMD. 3952 Memorandum on Measures to Secure  
             Reductions in National Expenditures.

1932        CMD. 4189 Disarmament Conference Declaration  
             of Policy, etc.





- 1934 CMD. 4498 British Memorandum on Disarmament.
- 1934 CMD. 4559 Further Memorandum, Disarmament Conference.
- 1935 CMD. 4827 Statement Relating to Defence.
- 1935 CMD. 4927 Statement of Policy, HMG. Disarmament Conference.
- 1935 CMD. 4930 Exchange of Notes Between HMG and the German Government Regarding the Limitation of Naval Armaments (Anglo-German Naval Treaty).
- 1936 CMD. 5107 Statement Relating to Defence.
- 1936 CMD. 5136 London Naval Treaty.
- 1936 CMD. 5137 London Naval Treaty, Memorandum.
- 1936 CMD. 5301 Report of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the Vulnerability of Capital Ships to Air Attack.
- 1937 CMD. 5374 Statement Relating to Defence Expenditure.
- 1937 CMD. 5519 Anglo-German Naval Agreement.
- 1937 CMD. 5682 Statement Relating to Defence.
- 1938 CMD. 5680 Navy Estimates.
- 1938 CMD. 5944 Statement on Defence.
- 1939 CMD. 5952 Navy Estimates.
- 1940 CMD. 6166 Correspondence Regarding the Removal of German Citizens from the 'Asama Maru'.

#### Imperial Conferences

- 1921 CMD. 1474 Imperial Conference of 1921.
- 1923 CMD. 1987 Imperial Conference of 1923.
- 1923 CMD. 1988 Appendices to Imperial Conference of 1923.



- 1927        CMD. 2768 Imperial Conference of 1926.
- 1927        CMD. 2769 Appendices to Imperial Conference  
             of 1926.
- 1931        ----- Imperial Conference of 1930, Ottawa,  
             King's Printer, 1931.
- 1937        ----- Imperial Conference of 1937, Ottawa,  
             King's Printer, 1937.

Canada, Sessional Papers

- 1922        No. 47        Conference on the Limitation of  
             Armament held at Washington, Report  
             of the Canadian Delegate, Including  
             Treaties and Resolutions.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Official Publications:

Great Britain

Behrens, C.B.A., Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War  
London, 1955.

Beith, J.H., Arms and Men, London, 1932.

Air Chief Marshal Sir R. Brooke-Popham, "Operations in the  
Far East from 17th October, 1940 to 27th December, 1941",  
London Gazette, Supplement 22/1/48.

Butler, J.R.M., Grand Strategy, Vol. II, London, 1947.

Collier, B., "The Defence of the United Kingdom", London,  
1957.

Great Britain, House of Commons, House of Lords, Debates,  
1919-1941, Third Series.

Gwyer, J.M.A., and J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy, Vol.  
III, London, 1964.

Hall, H.D., North American Supply, London, 1956.

Hall, H.D., Wrigley, C.C., and J.D. Scott, Studies in  
Overseas Supply, London, 1956.





Hancock, Sir Keith and M.M. Gowing, British War Economy, London, 1949.

Hancock, Sir Keith and M. M. Postan, British War Production, London, 1953.

Howard, M., Grand Strategy, Vol. IV, London, 1941.

Inman, P., Labour in Munition Industries, London, 1957.

Kirby, Maj. Gen. S.W., The War Against Japan, Vols. I and II, London, 1957, 1958.

Maltby, Sir Paul, Air Vice-Marshal, "Report on the Air Operations During the Campaigns in Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies from 8th of December, 1941 to 12th of March, 1942", The London Gazette, Supplement, 20.2.48.

Medlicott, W.M., "The Economic Blockade", UKCS, Vols. I and II, London, 1952, 1959.

Naval Staff History, The War Against Japan, Vols. I and II. Historical Section, Admiralty, 1953.

One Power Standard, Some Postwar Pronouncements, Adm. 1930.

Parker, H.M.O., Manpower, London, 1957.

Percival, Lt. Gen. A.E., "Operations of Malaya Command from 8th of December 1941 to 15th of February 1942", London Gazette, Supplement, 26.2.48.

Playfair, Maj. Gen. Ian S. Ord, The Middle East, Vols. I and II, London 1954, 1956.

Richards, D., and Hilary St. George Saunders, The Royal Air Force, 1939-1949, Vol. II, London, 1954.

Roskill, S., The War at Sea, 1939-45, Vols. I, II and III, London, 1954, 1956, 1961.

Royal Navy List, 1902-1939.

Sayers, R.S., Financial Policy, 1939-1945, H.M.S.O., 1956.

Scott, J.D., and R. Hughes, The Administration of War Production, London, 1955.

Stuart, C.G., Cdr., RN., Historical Precis of the Japanese Navy and Japanese Far Eastern Policy, NID., 1924.



Webster, Sir Charles and Frankland, Noble, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, London, 1961. Vols. I-IV.

Woodward, E.L., Butler, R., Bury, J.P.T., Medlicott, W.N., Dakin, D. and M.E. Lambert, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1924, 1919-1939. Series IA (1925-1926) 1 Vol., HMSO, 1966; Series II (1929-1932) 9 Vols., London, 1946-1965; Series III (1938-1939) 10 Vols., London, 1949-1961.

Woodward, Sir L., British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, Vols. I and II, London, 1960, 1962.

#### Biographies and Autobiographies:

##### British Political/Diplomatic

Amery, The Rt. Hon. L.S., My Political Life, Vol. II and III War and Peace, 1914-1929, London, 1953, 1955.

Attlee, C.R., As It Happened, London, 1954.

Avon, The Earl of, The Eden Memoirs, Facing the Dictators, London, 1962.

Avon, The Earl of, (Anthony Eden), The Reckoning, London, 1965.

Birkenhead, the Earl of, Halifax, The Life of Lord Halifax, London, 1965.

Boothby, Lord, I Fight to Live, London, 1947.

Bowle, J., Viscount Samuel, A Biography, London, 1957.

Brett, M.V., The Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Esher, London, 1934. 3 Vols.

Broad, L., Winston Churchill, 1874-1951, London, 1931.

Bullock, A., The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, Vol. I, Trade Union Leader, 1881-1940, London, 1960.

-----, The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, Vol. II, Man of Labour, 1940-45, London, 1967.

Butler, J.R.M., Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) 1882-1940, London, 1969.



Carter, Lady Violet Bonham, Winston Churchill as I Knew Him, London, 1960.

Casey, Lord, Personal Experiences, 1936-46, London, 1962.

Cecil, Viscount, All the Way, London, 1949.

Chamberlain, Sir Austen, Down the Years, London, 1935.

Cooke, Colin, The Life of Richard Stafford Cripps, London, 1957.

Cooper, Duff (Lord Norwich), Old Men Forget, London, 1953.

Cowles, V., Winston Churchill, The Era and The Man, London, 1953.

Dalton, Hugh, The Fatefull Years, Memoirs 1931-45, London, 1957.

Dilks, D., ed., The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, London, 1971.

Dugdale, B.E.C., Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl Balfour, Vol. II, London, 1936.

Elliott, A.D., The Life of George J. Goschen, London, 1911.

Feiling, K., The Life of Neville Chamberlain, London, 1946.

Foot, M., Aneurin Bevan, Vol. I, London, 1962.

Gardner, B., Churchill in His Time, London, 1968.

Grey, Lord, Twenty-Five Years, Vol. I, London, 1936.

Halifax, Earl of, Fullness of Days, London, 1957.

James, R.R., Churchill, A Study in Failure, 1909-1939, London, 1970.

Jenkins, Roy, Mr. Attlee, An Interim Biography, London, 1948.

King, C., With Malice Toward None, London, 1969.

Lloyd, George D., War Memoirs, London, 6 Vols., 1933-36.

Macmillan, H., Winds of Change, 1914-39, London, 1966.

-----, The Blast of War, 1939-45, London, 1967.





MacLeod, Ian, Neville Chamberlain, London, 1961.

Middlemas, R.K., and Barnes, J., Stanley Baldwin, London, 1969.

Moran, Lord, Winston Churchill, The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965, London, 1966.

Morrison of Lambeth, Lord, Herbert Morrison: An Autobiography, London, 1960.

Petrie, Sir Charles, The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Austen Chamberlain, London, 2 Vols., 1939, 1940.

-----, Walter Long and His Times, London, 1936.

Piggott, F.S.G., Broken Thread, An Autobiography, Aldershot, 1950.

Rodgers, W.T., Hugh Gaitskill, 1906-1963, London, 1964.

Samuel, Viscount, Memoirs, London, 1945.

-----, Retrospect, London, 1952.

Sommer, D., Haldane of Cloan, London, 1960.

Swinton, Viscount, I Remember, London, 1948.

-----, 60 Years of Power, London, 1966.

Templewood, Viscount; (Samuel Hoare), Nine Troubled Years, London, 1954.

Vansittart, Lord, Lessons of My Life, London, 1943.

-----, The Mist Procession, London, 1958.

Wheeler-Bennett, Sir John, King George VI: His Life and Reign, London, 1958.

-----, ed., Action This Day. Working With Churchill, London, 1969.

Young, G.M., Stanley Baldwin, London, 1952.

Young, Kenneth, Arthur James Balfour, London, 1963.



Biographies and Autobiographies:

British Navel, Military and Air Force; Including WWII

Agar, A.W.S., Footprints in the Sea, London, 1959.

Bacon, Sir R.H., Adm., Life of John Rushworth, Earl Jellicoe, London, 1936.

Bryant, Sir A., Ed., The Turn of the Tide, London, 1957.

Boyle, A., Trenchard, Man of Vision, London, 1962.

Chalmers, W.S., The Life and Lectures of David, Earl Beatty, London, 1951.

Chatfield, Lord, The Navy and Defence, London, 1942.

-----, It Might Happen Again, Vols. I and II, London, 1947.

Churchill, Winston Spencer, The Second World War, Vols. I-IV, London, 1948-52.

Connell, J., Auchinleck, London, 1959.

-----, Wavell, Supreme Commander, London, 1969.

Cunningham, Adm. of the Fleet, Lord of Hyndhope, A Sailor's Odyssey, London, 1948.

Dreyer, Sir F.C., The Sea Heritage, London, 1955.

Fremantle, Adm. Sir Sydney, My Naval Career, London, 1949.

Goodenough, Adm. Sir W.E., A Rough Record, London, 1943.

Ismay, Lord, The Memoirs of Lord Ismay, London, 1960.

James, Sir W.M., Admiral Sir William Fisher, London, 1943.

-----, A Great Seaman. The Life of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Oliver, London, 1956.

Joubert de la Forte, Sir Philip, Birds and Fishes. The Story of Coastal Command, London, 1960.

Kerr, Adm. M., The Navy in My Time, London, 1933.





Kennedy, Sir J., The Business of War, London, 1957.

Leasor, J. and Gen. Sir Leslie Hollis, War At the Top, London, 1959.

Keyes, Adm. Sir Roger, The Naval Memoirs of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, London, 1930.

Longmore, Sir A.M., From Sea to Sky, 1910-1945, London, 1946.

MacIntyre, Capt. D., Fighting Admiral. The Life and Battles of Admiral of the Fleet, Sir James Somerville, London, 1961.

Marder, A.J., Fear God and Dread Nought, Vol. III, Cambridge, 1959.

-----, Portrait of an Admiral: The Life and Papers of Sir Herbert Richmond, London, 1952.

Minney, R.J., The Private Papers of Leslie Hore-Belisha, London, 1960.

Murray, Lady, The Making of a Civil Servant: Sir Osloyn Murrar, London, 1940.

Roskill, S., Hankey, Man of Secrets, Vols. I and II, London, 1970.

Slessor, Sir John, The Central Blue, London, 1956.

Tedder, Lord, With Prejudice, London, 1966.

Terraine, John, The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten, London, 1968.

Tunstall, B., Pull Together, the Memoirs of Admiral, Sir Lewis Bayly, London, 1939.

Walker, Sir C., Thirty-Four Years in the Admiralty, London, 1934.

Wemyss, Lady Wester, The Life and Letters of Adm. of the Fleet, Lord Wester Wemyss, London, 1935.

Whelan, J., Home is the Sailor, London, 1957.

Woollcombe, R., The Campaigns of Wavell, 1939-1943, London, 1959.



Naval, Military Policy Pre-1914

Aston, Sir George, RN, The Sea Land and Air Strategy, London, 1914.

Barnett, C., The Sword Bearers, London, 1963.

Bridge, Adm. Sir C., The Art of Naval Warfare, London, 1907.

Colomb, Rear-Adm. P.H., Naval Warfare, London, 1891.

Corbett, Sir J.S., Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, London, 1918.

Earle, E., ed., Makers of Modern Strategy; Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler, Princeton, 1948.

Graham, G.S., The Politics of Naval Superiority, Cambridge, 1964.

Jane, F., Heresies of Sea Power, London, 1906.

Marder, A.J., British Naval Policy, 1880-1905, London, 1941.

-----, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, London, 1961.

Schurman, D.M., The Education of a Navy, The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1867-1914, London, 1965.

Naval, Military and Air Policy 1918-1939

Ackworth, B., Capt., RN, The Navies of Today and Tomorrow, London, 1930.

-----, Britain in Danger, London, 1937.

-----, The Restoration of England's Sea Power, London, 1935.

Bacon, Adm., Sir R., RN, and F.E. McMurtrie, Modern Naval Strategy, London, 1940.

Bell, Lt.-Cdr. A.C., RN, (Ret.) Sea Power and the Next War, London, 1938.

Bienstock, G., The Struggle for the Pacific, London, 1937.



Bonnett, S., The Price of Admiralty, London, 1968.

Briffault, R., The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, N.Y., 1938.

Bywater, H.C., Navies and Nations, London, 1927.

-----, Sea Power in the Pacific, London, 1934.

Cresswell, Capt. John, Sea Warfare, London, 1967.

Dewar, Vice-Adm. K.E.B., The Navy From Within, London, 1939.

Divine, D., The Blunted Sword, London, 1964.

Domvile, Adm. Sir B., Look to Your Moat, London, 1937.

Draer, G., Sea Power, London, 1931.

Dreyer, Vice-Adm. Sir F.C., RN, The Sea Heritage, A Study of Maritime Warfare, London, 1956.

Edwards, Lt.-Cdr. K., RN, The Mutiny at Invergordon, London, 1936.

-----, Uneasy Oceans, London, 1939.

-----, The Grey Diplomats, London, 1938.

Grenfell, Capt. R., RN, Sea Power in the Next War, London, 1938.

-----, The Men Who Defend Us, London, 1938.

-----, Sea Power, London, 1941.

Hearnshaw, J.F.C., Sea Power and Empire, London, 1940.

Higham, R., Armed Forces in Peacetime Britain, 1918-1940, A Case Study, London, 1963.

-----, The Military Intellectuals, 1918-1939, New Brunswick, 1966.

Kruse, E.W., Modern Naval Strategy, Berlin, 1938.

MacMillan, Capt. N., The RAF in the World War, Vol. I, 1919-1940; London, 1949.

Moore, F., America's Naval Challenge, N.Y., 1929.





Pargiter, Maj. R.B., and Maj. H.G. Eady, The Army and Sea Power, London, 1927.

Richmond, Adm., Sir H.W., Sea Power in the Modern World, London, 1934.

Richmond, Vice-Adm. Sir H.W., Naval Policy and Naval Strategy, London, 1927.

-----, National Policy and Naval Strength, and Other Essays, London, 1928.

-----, Economy and National Security, London, 1931.

-----, Statesmen and Sea Power, Melbourne, 1946.

Roskill, S.W., Naval Policy Between the Wars, 1919-1929, Vol. I, London, 1968.

Wright, L., The Wooden Sword, London, 1967.

#### Naval, Military, Air World War II

Barnett, C., The Desert Generals, London, 1960.

Dawson, R.M., Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, London, 1940.

de Belot, Rear-Adm., R., The Struggle For the Mediterranean, 1939-45, Princeton, 1951.

Frankland, N., The Bombing Offensive Against Germany, London, 1965.

Gretton, Vice-Adm., Sir Peter, Former Naval Person: Winston Churchill and the Royal Navy, London, 1968.

Howard, M., The Development of the Mediterranean Strategy, London, 1968.

-----, The Continental Commitment, London, 1972.

Kemp, Cdr. P.K., Victory at Sea, London, 1957.

Kingston McCloughey, Wing-Cdr. E.J., RAF, Winged Warfare, London, 1958.



MacIntyre, Capt. D., RN, The Battle of the Atlantic, 1961.

-----, Narvik, London, 1959.

Marder, A.J., "Winston is Back, Churchill at the Admiralty", English Historical Review, Vol. 1, London, 1972.

Parkinson, R., Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat. The War History from Dunkirk to Alamein, London, 1973.

Verrier, A., The Bomber Offensive, London, 1970.

Books Dealing with Singapore Naval Base

Bennett, H.G., Why Singapore Fell, Sydney, 1944.

Crisp, D., Why We Lost Singapore, London, 1944.

Donahugh, Flt.-Lt. A.G., Last Flight From Singapore, N.Y., 1943.

Gallagher, O.D., Retreat in the East, London, 1942.

Kirby, Maj.-Gen. S.W., Singapore, The Chain of Disaster, London, 1971.

MacKenzie, C., 'Defence', Eastern Epic, Vol. I, Sept. 1939-March 1943, London, 1951.

Miller, E.H., Strategy at Singapore, N.Y., 1942.

Morrison, I., Malayan Postscript, London, 1942.

-----, The War Against Japan, London, 1943.

Playfair, G., Singapore Goes Off the Air, London, 1950.

Rawlings, G.S., Malaya, London, 1936.

Reid, C., Malayan Climax, Tasmania, 1942.

Rose, A., Who Dies Fighting, London, 1944.

Sharp, J.C., Impregnable Fortress. A Brief Collection of Orders, Articles, and Verses on the Fall of Singapore, 1942, (mimeographed), Birmingham, 1947.





Simson, Ivan, Singapore - Too Little, Too Late, London, 1970.

Strabolgi, Lord, Singapore and After, London, 1942.

"Strategicus", War Moves East, London, 1942.

Thompson, V., Postmortem on Malaya, N.Y., 1943.

Weller, O., Singapore is Silent, N.Y., 1943.

Wells, C., North of Singapore, London, 1940.

Books Dealing with British Naval Policy in the Far East

Ash, B., Someone Had Blundered, London, 1960.

Attiwill, K., The Singapore Story, London, 1959.

Glover, E.M., In 70 Days, London, 1949.

Grenfell, Capt. R., RN, Main Fleet to Singapore, London, 1952.

Hough, R., The Hunting of Force Z, London, 1963.

MacIntyre, Capt. D., RN, The Battle for the Pacific, London, 1966.

-----, Seapower in the Pacific, London, 1964.

Smith, P., Task Force 57, The British Pacific Fleet, 1944-45, London, 1969.

Winton, John, The Forgotten Fleet: The British Navy in the Pacific, 1944-45, N.Y., 1970.

Books Dealing with Ships, Class of Ships or Branches of the Royal Navy

Bradford, E., The Mighty Hood, London, 1959.

Hezlet, Vice-Adm. A., RN, The Submarine and Sea Power, London, 1967.

Hough, R., Dreadnought. A History of the Modern Battleship, London, 1968.



Jameson, Rear-Adm., Sir W., Arc Royal, London, 1957.

Kemp, Cdr. P.K., RN, H.M. Destroyers, London, 1956.

-----, H.M. Submarines, London, 1952.

-----, Fleet Air Arm, London, 1954.

Lipscombe, Cdr. F.W., RN, The British Submarine, London, 1954.

Mars, Cdr. A., RN, British Submarines at War, 1939-45, London, 1971.

Marsh, E.J., British Destroyers, London, 1966.

Parkes, O., British Battleships, 1860-1950, London, 1957.

Pears, Cdr. R., RN, British Battleships, 1892-1957, London, 1957.

Polmar, N., Aircraft Carriers, London, 1969.

Poole, S.L., The Cruiser. A History, 1889-1960, London, 1970.

Roskill, Capt. S.W., H.M.S. Warspite, London, 1957.

Thetford, O., British Naval Aircraft, 1912-1958, London, 1958.

#### Books of General Interest

Angell, N., The Great Illusion, N.Y., 1939.

Barnett, C., The Collapse of British Power, London, 1971.

-----, Britain and Her Army, London, 1970.

Cartril, H., Public Opinion, 1935-1946, Princeton, 1951.

Churchill, W.S., Step By Step, 1936-1939, N.Y., 1939.

-----, While England Slept, N.Y., 1938.

Grant, Sir Allan, Steel and Ships, London, 1950.

Hardy, A., Oil, Ships and Sea Transport, London, 1931.



Harris, J., The Big Slump, London, 1967.

Hinsley, F.H., Command of the Sea, London, 1949.

-----, Power and the Pursuit of Peace, London, 1963.

Howard, M., The Theory and Practice of War, London, 1965.

Kemp, Cdr. P.K., RN, ed., History of the Royal Navy, London, 1969.

Kennedy, J.F., Why England Slept, London, 1940.

Lewis, M., A History of the British Navy, London, 1959.

-----, The Navy of Britain, London, 1948.

-----, England's Sea Officers, London, 1939.

Lloyd, C., The Nation and the Navy, London, 1954.

Marwick, A., Britain in a Century of Total War, London, 1968.

McElwer, W., Britain's Locust Years, London, 1962.

Parkinson, R., Peace in Our Time, London, 1971.

Roskill, Capt. S.W., RN, The Strategy of Sea Power, London, 1962.

Schofield, B., British Sea Power, London, 1967.

Scott, J.D., Vickers, A History, London, 1962.

Sprout, H. and M., The Ecological Perspective, Princeton, 1965.

Siegfried, A., England's Crisis, Trans. H.H. and Doris Hemming, London, 1931.

#### Books of General Interest:

##### Imperial Defence

Angell, N., The Defence of the Empire, London, 1937.





Boycott, A.G., The Elements of Imperial Defence, London, 1938.

Cole, Maj. D.H., Imperial Military Geography, London, 1933.

-----, Changing Conditions of Imperial Defence, London, 1930.

Cornish, V., Geography of Imperial Defence, London, 1922.

Fuller, J.F.C., Imperial Defence, 1888-1914, London, 1928.

Gibbs, N.H., The Origins of Imperial Defence, London, 1955.

Gordon, D.C., The Dominion Partnership In Imperial Defence, 1870-1914, Baltimore, 1965.

Richmond, Adm., Sir H.W., Imperial Defence, London, 1932.

Rowan-Robinson, Gen. H., Imperial Defence, London, 1938.

#### Pacific Pre-1941

Blakeslee, G.H., The Pacific Area, An International Survey, Boston, 1929.

Bywater, H.C., The Great Pacific War, London, 1932.

Gayn, M.J., The Fight for the Pacific, London, 1941.

Golvin, Gen. N., The Problem of the Pacific in the 20th Century, London, 1922.

Roger, Wm., British Strategy in the Far East, 1919-1939, London, 1969.

Roosevelt, N., The Restless Pacific, N.Y., 1928.

Tiltman, H.H., and P.T. Etherton, The Pacific, a Forecast, London, 1928.

#### Government and Government Departments

Anderson, Rt. Hon. Sir J., The Machinery of Government, Oxford, 1946.



- Beer, S., Treasury Control, London, 1957.
- Bridges, E.B., The Treasury, London, 1927.
- Carter, B.E., The Office of the Prime Minister, London, 1956.
- Cole, G.D.H., A History of the Labour Policy From 1914, London, 1948.
- Colvin, I., The Chamberlain Cabinet, London, 1971.
- Ehrman, J., Cabinet Government and War, 1890-1940, Cambridge, 1958.
- Hankey, Lord, Government Control in War, London, 1945.
- Gardner, L., The British Admiralty, London, 1968.
- Jennings, Ivor, Cabinet Government, London, 1961.
- Johnson, F.A., Defence by Committee. The British Committee of Imperial Defence, 1885-1959, London, 1960.
- Owen, D., The Politics of Defence, London, 1972.
- Young, G.M., The Government of Britain, London, 1941.

Diplomatic/and International Relations:

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance

- Lowe, Peter, Great Britain and Japan, 1911-1915, London, 1969.
- Nish, I.H., Alliance in Decline, London, 1972.

-----, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires. 1894-1907, London, 1966.

Wood, G.Z., The United States and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, N.Y., 1921.

The Washington Conference

Buckley, T.H., The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-22, University of Tennessee, 1970.





Ichihashi, Y., The Washington Conference and After, Stanford, 1928.

Sprout, H. and M., Toward a New Order of Sea Power, Princeton, 1946.

Taft, H.W., Japan and the Far East Conference, N.Y., 1921.

Vinson, J.C., The Parchment Peace: the United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-22, Atlanta, 1955.

#### The London Naval Conference 1930

O'Connor, R.G., Perilous Equilibrium. The U.S. and the London Naval Conference of 1930, Kansas City, 1962.

#### Disarmament General

Chaput, R.A., Disarmament in British Foreign Policy, London, 1935.

Engely, G., The Politics of Naval Disarmament, London, 1932.

Wheeler-Bennett, J.W., and Langerman, F.E., Information on the Problem of Security, 1917-1926, London, 1927.

-----, The Problem of Security, London, 1927.

Wheeler-Bennett, J.W., Information on the Renunciation of War, 1927-28, London, 1928.

-----, The Reduction of Armaments, London, 1925.

-----, Disarmament and Security, London, 1932.

-----, The Disarmament Deadlock, London, 1934.

#### Anglo-American Relations

Allen, H.C., Great Britain and the United States, A History of Anglo-American Relations, 1783-1952, N.Y., 1955.



Fox, F., The Mastery of the Pacific. Can the British and the Americans Agree? London, 1928.

Gelber, L.M., The Rise of Anglo-American Friendship, London, 1938.

Goodhart, P., Fifty Ships That Saved the World; The Foundations of the Anglo-American Alliance, London, 1965.

Heindel, R.H., The American Impact on Great Britain, Philadelphia, 1940.

Higgins, T., Winston Churchill and the Second Front, 1940-43, N.Y., 1957.

Morison, S.E., American Contributions to the Strategy of World War II, N.Y., 1958.

Morison, Rear-Adm. S.E., Strategy and Compromise, Boston, 1958.

#### British Policy; Japan and China

Kennedy, M.D., The Estrangement of Great Britain and Japan, 1917-1935, Manchester, 1969.

Louis, W.R., British Strategy in the Far East, Oxford, 1971.

Nicholas, R.C., Retreat From China: British Policy in the Far East, 1937-41, Seattle, 1967.

#### British Foreign Policy

Carr, E.H., The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939, London, 1939.

Collier, B., Barren Victories, Versailles to Suez, 1918-1956, London, 1964.

Foot, M., Armistice. 1918-1939, London, 1940.

Gibbs, P., England Speaks, London, 1935.

Gilbert, M., Roots of Appeasement, London, 1966.

Hankey, Lord, Diplomacy by Conference, Studies in Public Affairs, 1920-1946, London, 1946.



Langer, W.L., The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 2nd. ed., N.Y., 1968.

Medlicott, W.N., Britain and Germany: The Search For Agreement, 1930-37, London, 1969.

-----, British Foreign Policy Since Versailles, London, 1940.

Mowat, R., Britain Between the Wars, London, 1955.

Northedge, F.S., The Troubled Giant, London, 1966.

Reynolds, P.A., British Foreign Policy in the War Years, London, 1954.

Seaton, R.W., Britain and the Dictators, Cambridge, 1938.

Strang, Lord, Britain in World Affairs, London, 1961.

Taylor, A.J.P., The Origins of the Second World War, London, 1961.

Watt, D.C., Personalities and Policies, The Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century, North Bend, 1965.

Wheeler-Bennett, Sir J.W., Munich, Prologue to Tragedy, London, 1948.

## UNITED STATES

### Official Publications

Ballantine, D.S., U.S. Naval Logistics in the Second World War, Princeton, 1947.

Cline, R.S., Washington Command Post. The Operations Division, Washington, 1951.

Craven, W.E., and J.L. Cate, The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vols. I, II, III, Chicago, 1948, 49, 51.

Dziuban, Colonel S.W., USA, Military Relations Between the United States and Canada, Washington, 1959.





Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919-1942,  
Washington, Various Dates.

Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, Vol. I  
and II, Washington, 1948.

Greenfield, K.R., ed., Command Decisions, N.Y, 1959.

Leighton, R.M., and Coakley, Global Logistics and  
Strategy, 1940-43, Washington, 1955.

MacDonald, Scot, The Evolution of Aircraft Carriers,  
Washington, 1964.

Matloff, M. and E.M. Snell, Strategic Planning for  
Coalition Warfare, Washington, 1953.

Morrison, Rear Adm. S.E., USN, Retd., History of United  
Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. I and III, Boston,  
1957.

Morton, L., The Fall of the Philippines, Washington, 1953.

Navy Weapons, United States Naval Aviation, 1910-1960,  
Washington, 1960.

Office of Naval Intelligence, USN, Japanese Intelligence  
Services, Monograph, Washington, 1957.

Papers Relating to The Foreign Relations of the United  
States, Japan, 1931-41, Washington, 1943.

Pearl Harbour, Report of the Roberts Commission, held in  
Adm. AID 0911/42.

Romanus, C.F., and R. Sutherland, Stilwell's Mission to  
China, Washington, 1956.

U.S. Congress, Hearings Before (Report of) the Joint  
Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbour  
Attack, Washington, 39 pts., Senate Document 244.

United States Strategic Bombing Survey, "The Campaigns of  
the Pacific War", Washington, 1946.

-----, "Japanese Intelli-  
gence Information Available to the Navy", Tokyo, 1945.



United States Strategic Bombing Survey, "Japanese Military and Naval Intelligence Division", Washington, 1946.

-----, "Interrogation of Japanese Officials", Washington, 1946, Vol. I and II.

-----, "Oil in Japan's War", Washington, 1946.

U.S. War Department, Handbook on Japanese Military Forces, Washington, 1944.

Watson, M.S., Prewar Plans and Preparations, Washington, 1950.

Biographies and Autobiographies:

American Political

Blum, J.M., From the Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Vol. II the Years of Urgency, 1938-41, Boston, 1965.

Forrestal, James, The Forrestal Diaries, W. Millis, ed., N.Y., 1951.

Hull, Cordell, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Vol. I and II, London, 1948.

Ickes, Harold L., The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Vol. I and II, N.Y., 1953, 1954.

Sherwood, R.E., The White House Papers of Harry J. Hopkins, 2 Vols., London, 1949.

Stimson, H.L., The Diary of Henry L. Stimson, New Haven, N/D.

Stimson, H.L., and Bundy, M., On Active Service in Peace and War, London, 1948.

Pringle, H.F., Theodore Roosevelt, N.Y., 1931.

Rosenman, S.I., ed., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, N.Y., 1950.

Roosevelt, Eleanor, As He Saw It, N.Y., 1946.





American Biographies and Autobiographies:

Naval, Military and Air - Prewar and World War II

Arnold, Gen. H., USAAF, Global Mission, N.Y., 1951.

Brereton, Lt.-Gen. L.H., USAAF, The Brereton Diaries, N.Y., 1946.

Clark, J.J., and Reynolds, C.G., Carrier-Admiral, N.Y., 1967.

Hatsey, W.F., and Bryan, J., Admiral Halsey's Story, N.Y., 1947.

King, E.J., and Whithill, W.M., Fleet Admiral King; A Naval Record, N.Y., 1952.

Leahy, W.D., Adm., USN, I Was There, London, 1950.

Leutz, J., ed., The London Journal of General Raymond E. Lee, 1940-41, Toronto, 1971.

Progue, F., George C. Marshall, N.Y., 1967.

Puleston, Capt. W.D., USN, The Life and Work of Capt. Alfred Taylor Mahon, New Haven, 1939.

Rosen, S.M., The Combined Boards of the Second World War, N.Y., 1951.

Taylor, C.C., The Life of Adm. Mahan, Naval Philosopher, N.Y., 1920.

Welles, S., Seven Major Decisions, London, 1951.

Books of General Interest

Brody, B., Sea Power in the Machine Age. 1814-1940, Princeton, 1943.

----- , A Guide to Naval Strategy, Princeton, 1958.

Davis, G.T., A Navy Second to None. The Development of Modern American Naval Policy, N.Y., 1940.

Davis, K., The American Experience of War, 1939-45, London, 1970



Denlinger, S. and Lt.-Cdr. Gary, C.B., USN, War in the Pacific, N.Y., 1936.

Millis, W., Armies and Men. A Study of American Military History, London, 1958.

Puleston, Capt. W.D., USN, The Armed Forces of the Pacific, a Comparison of the Military and Naval Power of the United States and Japan, New Haven, 1941.

-----, The Influence of Sea Power in World War II, New Haven, 1947.

Raleigh, J.M., Pacific Blackout, N.Y., 1943.

Settinus, E.R., Lend-Lease, Weapon for Victory, N.Y., 1944.

#### Books of General Interest:

##### United States - Foreign Policy

Beard, C.A., American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940, New Haven, 1948.

-----, President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941, New Haven, 1948.

Davis, F., and E.K. Lindley, How War Came to America, N.Y., 1942.

Feis, H., The Road to Pearl Harbor, Princeton, 1950.

Gleason, S.E., and W.S. Langer, The Undeclared War, 1940-1941, London, 1953.

-----, The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940, London, 1952.

Grew, D.E., Ten Years in Japan, N.Y., 1944.

Griswold, A.W., The Far Eastern Policy of the United States, N.Y., 1938.

Johnson, W., The Battle Against Isolation, Chicago, 1944.

Kennan, G.F., American Diplomacy, 1900-1950, London, 1952.



Millis, W., This is Pearl, the United States and Japan, 1941, N.Y., 1947.

Reischauer, E.O., The United States and Japan, Cambridge, Mass., 1950.

Schroeder, P.W., The Axis Alliance and Japanese-American Relations, Ithaca, 1958.

Stimson, H.L., Far Eastern Crisis, London, 1936.

Tansill, C.C., Back Door to War, The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, Chicago, 1952.

Wheeler, G.E., Prelude to Pearl Harbour, the United States and the Far East, 1921-31, University of Missouri, 1963.

Tuleya, T.V., Statesmen and Admirals: Quest For A Far Eastern Policy, N.Y., 1963.

#### BRITISH EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH

##### Australia - Official Publications

Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, The Senate and House of Representatives, 1919-1941.

Ellison, D., Royal Australian Air Force, 1939-42, Canberra, 1962.

Gill, G.H., The Royal Australian Navy, 1939-1942, Canberra, 1957.

Hasluck, P., The Government and the People, Vol. I, Series 4, Civil, Canberra, 1949.

Wigmore, M.S., The Japanese Thrust, Canberra, 1957.

##### Australia - Books of General Interest

"Albatross", Japan and the Defense of Australia, Melbourne.

Collins, Vice-Adm., Sir John, As Luck Would Have It, Melbourne, 1965.

Eggleston, F.W., Reflections on Australian Foreign Policy, Melbourne, 1951.





Hall, H.L., Australia and England, London, 1934.

Hughes, Rt. Hon. W.M., Australia and War Today, Sydney, 1935.

-----, The Splendid Adventure, London, 1929.

Macandie, G.L., The Genesis of the Royal Australian Navy, Sydney, 1949.

Mark, E.G., Watch the Pacific, Sydney, 1924.

McGuire, F.M., The Royal Australian Navy: Its Origin, Development and Organization, Melbourne, 1949.

Shepard, J., Australia's Interests and Policies in the Far East, N.Y., Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940.

#### Canada - Office Publications

Schull, J., The Far Distant Ships, Ottawa, 1950.

Stacey, C.P., Arms, Men and Governments, Ottawa, 1972.

Tucker, G.N., The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History, Ottawa, 1952.

#### Canada - Books of General Interest

Eayres, J., In Defence of Canada, From the Great War to the Great Depression, Toronto, 1964.

-----, In Defence of Canada, Appeasement and Rearmament, Toronto, 1965.

Preston, R.A., Canada and Imperial Defense, 1867-1919, Toronto, 1967.

Strange, W., Canada, the Pacific and War, Toronto, 1937.

Woodsworth, C.J., Canada and the Orient, Toronto, 1941.

#### New Zealand - Official Publications

Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War, Vol. I, Wellington, 1949.



Gillespie, O.A., "The Pacific", New Zéaland Official War History, 1939-1945, Wellington, 1952.

New Zealand, Debates, Legislative Council and House of Representatives, 1919-41.

Wood, F.L.W., The New Zealand People at War, Wellington, 1958.

#### New Zealand - Books of General Interest

Allen, Sir James, New Zealand and Naval Defence, N.P., 1929.

"Contemporary New Zealand", New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Auckland, 1938.

Milner, I.E., New Zealand's Interest and Policies in the Far East, N.Y., 1940.

#### India - Official Publications

Prasad, B., ed., "Campaigns in the Eastern Theatre, The Retreat from Burma, 1941", Official History of the Indian Armed Services in World War II, Combined Inter-Service Historical Section, India and Pakistan, 1955.

Outline Narrative of the Malaya Campaign, December 1941-February 1942, Simla, Historical Section, I.A., 1942.

Strategical Study of India's Connection with the Loss of Malaya and Burma, Historical Section, I.A., Simla, 1942.

#### British Commonwealth - Books of General Interest

Dewey, A.G., The Dominions and Diplomacy, London, 1929.

Elliott, W.H., and Hall, H.D., The British Commonwealth at War, New York, 1943.

Mansergh, N., ed., Documents and Speeches on Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-52, Oxford, 1952.

Mansergh, N., Problems of Wartime Co-operation and Postwar Change, 1939-52, Oxford, 1958.

"Outis", Mr. Churchill, the Admiralty and the Self-Governing Dominions, London, N.D.





## GERMANY

### Official Publications

Admiralty, Fuhrer Conferences on Naval Affairs, 1939-45, 8 Vol., Mimeograph, 1947-48.

British Intelligence Objectives, Sub-Committee, German-Japanese Relations from 1936-45, London, 1946.

British Intelligence Objectives, Sub-Committee, German-Japanese Naval Liaison, 1945.

U.S. Department of State, Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-41, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, Sontag, R.J. and J.S. Beddie, eds., Department of State Publication 3023, Washington, 1948.

### Books of General Interest

Deane, Maj. Gen. J.R., USA, The Strange Alliance, London, 1947.

Goebbels, J., The Goebbels Diaries, Trans. L.R. Lochner, London, 1948.

Hinsley, F.H., Hitler's Strategy, Cambridge, 1951.

Martienstein, A., Hitler and His Admirals, London, 1948.

Raeder, E., Sea Warfare 1939-45, A German Viewpoint, Trans. M.G. Saunders, London, 1957.

Ruge, Vice-Adm. F., Sea Warfare, 1939-1945, A German Viewpoint, Trans. Capt. M.G. Saunders, RN, London, 1957.

Von Dirksen, H., Moscow, Tokyo, London, London, 1946.

Waldeyer, Hartz, Capt. Von, Modern Naval Strategy, Berlin, 1936.

Weizsaecker, Baron E. Von, The Memoirs of Ernest Von Weizsaecker, Trans. J. Andres, London, 1951.

Werner, M., The Military Strength of the Powers, Trans. E. Fitzgerald, London, 1939.

Woodward, E.L., Great Britain and the German Navy, Oxford, 1935.



## ITALY

### Books of General Interest

Ciano, G., Ciano's Diaries, 1939-43, Muggeridge, M., ed., London, 1947.

Muggeridge, M., ed., Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, Trans. S. Hood, London, 1948.

## JAPAN

### Official Publications

Allied Translator and Interpreter Section; U.S. Army Supreme Command, Japan's Decision to Fight; Report No. 131, Adm. 51/1946.

-----, Japanese Plan of Operations and Supply in the Pearl Harbour, Midway, Aleutian and Other Campaigns, Document 10053, T.S.D. 83/47.

-----, Naval Operations in Hawaii and Malaya, No. 6, T.S.D. 84/47.

The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, Military History Section, G.H.Q., F.E.C., February 1952.

British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee, Naval Liaison Between Germany and Japan, London, 1945.

British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee, Study of the Cabinet Planning Board, (Japan), London, 1946.

### Books of General Interest, Including WWII:

#### General

Abend, H., Japan Unmasked, London, 1941.

-----, Ramparts of the Pacific, London, 1942.

Allen, G.C., Japan, The Hungry Guest, London, 1938.

Bergamini, D., Japan's Imperial Conspiracy, N.Y., 1971.

Bims, Hugh, The Japanese Enemy, London, 1942.



Cohen, J.B., Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction, Minneapolis, 1949.

Fujisawa, Rikitaro, The Recent Aims and Political Developments of Japan, London, 1923.

Goette, J., Japan Fights For Asia, N.Y., 1943.

Gubbins, J.H., The Making of a New Japan, London, 1922.

Kase, T., Journey to the Missouri, N.Y., 1950.

Kato, M., The Lost War, N.Y., 1946.

Kennedy, M.D., The Military Side of Japanese Life, London, 1924.

-----, The Problem of Japan, London, 1935.

-----, Some Aspects of Japan and Her Defence Forces, London, 1928.

Lory, H., Japan's Military Masters, N.Y., 1943.

McGovern, W.M., Modern Japan, Its Political, Military and Industrial Organization, London, 1920.

Moore, F., With Japan's Leaders. An Intimate Record of Fourteen Years as Counsellor to the Japanese Government, Ending December 7, 1941, N.Y., 1942.

Patric, J., Why Japan Was Strong, N.Y., 1943.

Pitkin, W.B., Must We Fight Japan?, London, 1933.

Tanin, D. and E. Yohan, Militarism and Fascism in Japan, London, 1934.

Toland, J., The Rising Sun, the Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire 1936-45, N.Y., 1970.

Tsuji, M., Singapore, the Japanese Version, Sydney, 1960.

Yanaga, Chitose, Japan Since Perry, N.Y., 1949.

#### Foreign Policy

Butow, R.J.C., Tokyo and the Coming of the War, Princeton, 1961.





Causton, E.E.N., Militarism and Foreign Policy in Japan, London, 1936.

Clark, G., A Place in the Sun, N.Y., 1936.

Craigie, Sir Robert, Behind the Japanese Mask, London, N.D.

Crowley, J.B., Japan's Quest For Autonomy, Princeton, 1966.

Grande, J., Japan's Place in the World, London, 1934.

Hashimoto, T., The Untold Story of Japanese-American Negotiations, Tokyo, 1946.

Jones, F.C., Japan's New Order in East Asia, Its Rise and Fall, 1937-1945, London, 1954.

Kawakami, K.K., What Japan Thinks, N.Y., 1921.

Kuno, Yoshi, S., What Japan Wants, N.Y., 1921.

Matsuo, Kinoski, IJN, Intelligence Division, The Crisis of the League of Nations and a United States-Japanese War, London, 1936.

Roth, A., Japan Strikes South, I.P.R., N.Y., 1941.

Royama, M., The Foreign Policy of Japan, 1914-1939, Japanese Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941.

Shigemitsu, M., Japan and Her Destiny: My Struggle for Peace, N.Y., 1958.

Stein, E., Made in Japan, London, 1935.

Takeuchi, T., War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire, N.Y., 1935.

Willoughby, W.W., The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations, Baltimore, 1935.

#### Books Dealing with the Japanese Navy

D'Albas, A., Death of A Navy, Japanese Naval Action in World War II, N.Y., 1957.



Falk, I., and Falk, E.A., Togo and the Rise of Japanese Sea Power, N.Y., 1936.

Ishimaru, Lt.-Cdr. Tota, IJN, Japan Must Fight Britain, Trans. Instr. Capt. G.V. Rayment, RN (Ret.), London, 1936.

-----, IJN, The Inevitable Anglo-Japanese War, Admiralty Library, London, 1934.

-----, IJN, The Next World War, Trans. B. Matsukawa, London, 1937.

Kusaka, R., The Combined Fleet: Memoirs of Former Chief of Staff Kusaka, Tokyo, 1952,

Matsuo, Kinoski, IJN, How Japan Plans to Win, Trans. K.K. Hann, Boston, 1942.

Mitsuto, F., and Masatake, O., Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan, London, 1957.

Okumiya, M., and Horikoshi, J., Zero! The Story of the Japanese Navy Air Force 1937-1945, London, 1957.

Potter, J.D., Admiral of the Pacific: The Life of Yamamoto, N.Y., 1965.

Watts, A.J., Japanese Warships of World War II, London, 1966.

-----, and B.G. Gordon, The Imperial Japanese Navy, London, 1971.

## NETHERLANDS

### Official Publications

Kroese, A., Lt.-Cdr. R. Neth. N., The Dutch Navy at War, London, 1945.

### Books of General Interest

Mook, H., Van, The Netherlands East Indies and Japan; Their Relations, 1940-41, London, 1944.





USSR

Official Publications

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., Correspondence Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., The President of the U.S.A., and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45, Vol. I, London, 1958.

Books of General Interest

Beloff, M., The Foreign Relations of Soviet Russia, Vol. I, 1929-1936, Vol. II, 1936-1941, London, 1947, 1949.

Dallin, D.J., Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-43, New Haven, 1944.

-----, Soviet Russia in the Far East, New Haven, 1948.

MISCELLANEOUS OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

War Crimes Trials, Joint Anglo-American Studies, Etc.

Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, published jointly by the British Foreign Office and the United States Department of State, Series D, (1937-45). Vol. I-VIII, London, 1949-57.

International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, A Collection of Documentary Evidence and Guide Materials prepared by the American and British prosecuting Staffs for the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 8 Volumes with Opinion and Judgement Supplement A & B, Washington, 1946-47.

International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, 1945-46, Proceedings and Documents in Evidence, Nuremberg, 1947-49, 42 Volumes.

International Military Tribunal, Far East, Record of Proceedings, Exhibits, Judgement, Dissenting Judgements, Preliminary Interrogations, Miscellaneous Documents, Tokyo, 1946-48.



Saionji-Harada Memoirs, 1929-1940, Nos. 56 and 57 of Bound Vols. of Exhibits of IWCTFE, Tokyo.

### Articles

A.H.T., "The Far East", NR., Vol. XXVI, (August, 1938).

---, "The Situation in the Far East", NR., Vol. XXVII, (August, 1939).

Altham, Capt. E., "The Administration of the Fighting Services", Fortnightly Rev., Vol. CXXVI, (July, 1926).

-----, "Foreign Navies", BNA, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939.

Arnold-Foster, Rear-Adm. D., "The New Entente", Admiralty File, PNS, 142, 1928, (hereafter known as Adm.)

"As New Zealand Sees Singapore", LD, Vol. 81, (May, 1924).

Aston, Maj.-Gen. A.G., "Japan and Singapore", 19C, Vol. 94, (August 1923).

-----, "Disarmament and the Navy", 19C, Vol. 97, (May, 1926).

-----, "Singapore", 19C, Vol. 95, (April, 1924).

Angell, N., "The Ultimate Politics of the Conference", CR., No. 137, (March, 1930).

Angus, H.F., "Canada and Naval Rivalry in the Pacific", Institute of Pacific Relations, Vol. 8, (June, 1935).

Armstrong, Lt.-Col. D., USA, "The British Reevaluate Their Strategic Bases", Proof, JRUSI, (November, 1939).

"Australia and Japan", Round Table, Vol. 33, (December, 1933).

"Australia and Pacific Relations", Round Table, Vol. 17, (1927).

"Australian Opinion on the British Labour Government", Round Table, Vol. 14, (September, 1924).



"Australia and the Imperial Conference", Round Table, Vol. 14, (June 1924).

"Australian Naval Defence", Round Table, Vol. 14, (June, 1924).

Bain, H.F., "Singapore Control of Key Mineral Resources", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 7 (July, 1927), (hereafter known as FA).

Barker, J.E., "The Washington Conference and the Far East", FNR, Vol. III, (January, 1922).

Barnett, C., "The Education of Military Elites", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 2, no. 3, (1969).

Beer, S.H., "Treasury Control, the Co-ordination of Financial Policy in Great Britain", Amer. Pol. Sci. Rev., Vol. XLIX, (March, 1955).

Bell, Lt.-Cdr. A.C., RN, "The Meaning of the One Power Standard", BNA, 1931.

Berlin, I., "Mr. Churchill in 1940", The Atlantic Monthly, (November, 1949).

Booth, K., "History or Logic as Approaches to Strategy", JRUSI, Vol. CXVII, (September, 1972).

Boyd, L.L., "The Wasted Ten Years, 1888-98", JRUSI, Vol. CXI, (November, 1966).

Brebner, J.B., "Canada, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and The Washington Conference", Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 50, (March, 1935).

"Britain's Naval Project Abandoned", LD, no. 81, (April, 1924).

Brownrigg, Rear-Adm. H.J.S., RN, "Naval Bases in Relation to Empire Defence", JRUSI, Vol. 77, (February, 1932).

Brownlie, D., "Fuel and Power as National Problems", FNR, (October, 1928).

Bruce, Brig. Gen. C.D., "The Menace of the Far East", NR, Vol. XIII, (May, 1925).





Bywater, H.C., "Japan a Sequel to the Washington Conference", Atlantic Monthly, (February, 1923).

-----, "Japanese Naval Policy", 19C, Vol. 96, (November, 1925).

-----, "The Coming Struggle for Sea Power", Current History, no. 41 (October, 1934).

Campbell, J.P., "Marines, Aviators and the Battleship Mentality, 1923-1933", JRUSI, (February, 1964).

Cator, G.E., "Malaya / The First Year", Asiatic Review, Vol. 36, (October, 1940).

Clark, J.J., "Anglo-German Negotiations, 1898-1914, and 1935-1938, A Study in Arms Control", JRUSI, Vol. CVIII, (November, 1965).

Colbeck, A., (nom de plume of Lt.-Cdr. A.C. Bell), "The Strategic Problem of the Pacific", BNA, (1923).

Coleman, F., "Problems of the Pacific", FNR, Vol. 110, (October 1921).

Coate, P.C., "Dutch Naval Interests in the East", Asiatic Review, Vol. 20, (January, 1924).

Corbett, Sir J.S., "The Revival of Naval History", CR, (November, 1917).

Cornish, V., "Singapore and Naval Geography", United Empire, Vol. 16, (August, 1925).

Corey, H., "America's Need of Sea Power", Current History, Vol. 41, (December, 1934).

"Custos", "The One Power Standard and the New Diplomacy", Adm. Library, PNS 142, (1929).

Davies, Lord, "Implications of Collective Security", 19C, (October, 1934).

Dewar, Capt. K.G.B, RN, "British Trade and Maritime Strategy in the Far East", Asiatic Review, Vol. 20, (July, 1924).

-----, RN, "The Naval Conference of 1930", 19C, Vol. III, (March, 1930).



Dewar, Rear-Adm. K.G.B., RN, "Singapore Naval Base",  
CR, no. 139, (July, 1930).

-----, RN, "After the Treaty of  
London, 1931", BNA, (1932).

-----, RN, "The Disarmament Conference,  
1933", BNA, (1934).

-----, RN, "The End of Disarmament",  
BNA, (1936).

-----, RN, "The Road to Rearmament",  
BNA, (1937).

"The Distribution of the Fleet", NR, Vol. VIII, (May, 1920).

Elliott, C.F., "The Genesis of the Modern American Navy",  
U.S.N. Institute Proceedings, March, 1966.

"Editorial Views of the Japanese Press", Trans Pacific,  
Vols. 12 and 13, (April 4, 1925 and November 6, 1926).

Fry, M.G., "The North Atlantic Triangle and The Abrogation  
of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance", Journal of Modern History,  
Vol. 39, (March, 1967).

Farley, M.S., "American Manoeuvres in Asia", Far East  
Survey, Vol. X, (July 14, 1941).

Falk, E.A., "British Power Since Jutland", The Yal Rev.,  
Vol. XXVIII, (June, 1939).

Fiennes, G., "Naval Problems of Today", 19C, Vol. 96,  
(July, 1925).

"The Fortnight", Far East Survey, Vol. 10, (April 21,  
1941).

Finer, H., "The British Cabinet, The House of Commons and  
the War", Pol. Sci. Quarterly, Vol. LVI, (September, 1941).

Fuller, Col. J.F.C., "The Nature and Purpose of a Fleet",  
19C, Vol. XCII, (October, 1921).

Galbraith, J.S., "The Imperial Conference of 1921 and  
the Washington Conference", CHR, Vol. 29, (June, 1948).

Gardiner, W.A., "America and Britain in the Far East",  
FNR, Vol. 116, (November, 1924).





Gardiner, W.A., "Some American Naval Vies", FWR, Vol. 113, (March, 1923).

Graham, C.H., "Australia and the Pacific", FA, Vol. 7, (October, 1928).

Greenburg, M., "Britain Mobilizes her Eastern Empire", Far East Survey, Vol. 10, (March 26, 1941).

Grant, Guy, "Singapore", 19C, Vol. 94, (September, 1923).

Hankey, Lord, "The Origin and Development of the Committee of Imperial Defence", Army Quarterly, July, 1927.

"Hellespont", "The United States and the Far East", NR, Vol. XXVI, (May, 1938).

Hurd, A., "America's Increasing Armaments, What Does It All Mean?", FNR, Vol. 121, (March, 1927).

-----, "The American Fleets Cruise in the Pacific", FNR, Vol. 117, (July, 1925).

-----, "Britain's Check on Japan", LD, no. 78, (August, 1923).

-----, "The Decline of British Naval Power", FR, Vol. CXXL, (April, 1924).

-----, "The Naval Base at Singapore, Is It Necessary?", ER, Vol. 37, (August, 1923).

-----, "Naval Scares in the United States", FNR, Vol. 117, (August, 1924).

-----, "The Navy in the Limelight", FNR, Vol. 118, (January, 1925).

-----, "The United States and Sea Power, A Challenge", FNR, Vol. 108, (February, 1919).

-----, "The Washington Conference and the Naval Issue", FNR, Vol. 110, (November, 1921).

Hurford, E.H., "Comparative Naval Strength", BNA, 1934.

-----, "Relative Naval Strength", BNA, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939.



Ismay, Maj.-Gen. H.L., "The Machinery of the Committee of Imperial Defence", JRUSI, Vol. 84, (May, 1939).

Jacob, Lt.-Gen., Sir Ian, "The High Level Conduct and Direction of World War II", JRUSI, Vol. 101, (1956).

James, Cdr. C.H.N., RN, "Naval Bases and Fighting Power", BNA, (1925).

"Japan's Bid for World Trade", Round Table, Vol. 33, (December, 1933).

Kawakami, K., "America and Japan", National Review, Vol. 95, (July, 1930).

-----, "The London Naval Conference Viewed From Japan", 19C, Vol. 110, (December, 1929).

Kemp, Lt.-Cdr. P., RN, "War Studies in the RN", JRUSI, Vol. III, (May, 1966).

Kennedy, M.D., "The Japanese Fighting Forces", 19C, Vol. 97, (March, 1926).

Kenworthy, Lt.-Cdr. J.M., RN, "The New Entente", Adm. File, PNS 142, (1929).

Kiralpy, A., "Japan's Strategic Problem", Far East Survey, Vol. 10, (February, 1941).

Knox, Capt. D.W., USN, "Eclipse of American Sea Power", Army and Navy Journal, (1922).

Leslie, Sir Norman, "The Mercantile Marine in a Future War", JRUSI, (August, 1929).

Leyland, J., "The Blue Water School: Principles of Defence", BNA, (1907).

Little, Capt. C.J.C., RN, "Naval Bases and Sea Power", JRUSI, Vol. 74, (February, 1929).

Lowe, Peter, "The British Empire and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance", History, Vol. LIV, (1969).

Lower, A.R.M., "Loring Christie and the Genesis of the Washington Conference, 1921-22", CHR, Vol. XLVII, (1966).

Machray, R., "The Situation in the Far East", FNR, Vol. 117, (January, 1925).



Mahan, Capt. A.T., "Preparation for Naval War", Harpers Magazine, Vol. 94, (February, 1897).

-----, "Considerations Governing the Disposition of Navies", NR, Vol. 39, (July, 1902).

-----, "Motives to Imperial Federation", NR, Vol. 39, (May, 1902).

Marder, A., "The Royal Navy and the Ethiopian Crisis, 1935-36", American Historical Review, (June, 1972).

Matheson, W.B., "New Zealand Experiments in Relation to Pacific Problems", Pacific Affairs, (January, 1930).

"Menace of Singapore", The Nation and Athenaeum, Vol. 36, (December, 1924).

Mills, L.A., "The Policies and Interests of Great Britain and Holland in the Far East", American Political Science Review, Vol. 32, (August, 1938).

Milner, S., "The Japanese Threat to Australia", Military Review, Vol. 29, (April, 1949).

Morison, E.E.A., "A Case Study of Innovation", Engineering and Science Monthly, (April, 1950).

Morton, L., "American and Allied Strategy in the Far East", Military Review, Vol. 29, (December, 1949).

-----, "Japan's Decision for War", United States Naval Institute Proceedings, (December, 1954).

Murray, Sir Oswyn, "The Admiralty", Mariners Mirror, Vols. XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV, (1937-39).

Namaura, Adm. K., IJN, "Japan's Demand for Naval Equality", FA, Vol. 13, (January, 1935).

"Nauticus", "The Naval Conference, the Political Byways", FNR, Vol. 124, (February, 1930).

"The Naval Conference", Empire Review, Vol. 51, (February, 1930).

"The Naval Situation in Relation to the New Economic Situation of Great Britain as a Result of the War", NR, Vol. IX, (February, 1921).





"New Zealand, I., Naval Problems", Round Table, Vol. 14, (June, 1924).

O'Connor, R.G., "The Yardstick of Naval Disarmament in the 1920's", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (December, 1958).

Poole, DeWitt C., "Light on Nazi Foreign Policy", FA, Vol. 24, (October, 1946).

Repington, Col. C., "Singapore or Sydney", Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. 214, (September, 1923).

Rees, G., "Churchill Reconsidered", Encounter, (November, 1965).

Reynolds, C.E., "Sea Power in the 20th Century", JRUSI, Vol. LXI, (May, 1966).

"H.W.R." (Richmond), "Australian Defence", NR, Vol. XXIV, (February, 1936).

Richmond, Adm. Sir H., "Britain's Naval Policy: Some Dangers and Delusions", Fortnightly Rev., Vol. CXXXIX, (April, 1932).

Robertson, H.C.H., "The Defence of Australia", Army Quarterly, Vol. XXX, (April, 1935).

Robinson, Cdr. C.N., RN, "Naval Forces of the British Empire", BNA, (1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936).

Rogers, L., "The United States, Parity and Neutrality", CR, no. 138, (February, 1930).

Ronan, W.J., "The Kra Canal: A Suez for Japan?", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 9, (September, 1936).

Roosevelt, N., "Laying Down the White Man's Burden", FA, Vol. 13, (April, 1935).

-----, "Strategy of Singapore", FA, Vol. 7, (January, 1929).

-----, "Philippine Independence and Peace in the Pacific", FA, Vol. 8, (April, 1930).

Rosinski, H., "German Theories of Sea Warfare", BNA, (1940).



Rosinski, H., "Command of the Sea", BNA, (1939).

Roskill, S., "Marder, Churchill and the Admiralty", JRUSI, Vol. 117, (December, 1972).

-----, "The Ten Year Rule", JRUSI, Vol. 118, (December, 1971).

Russell, H., "Snubbing a Great Profession: An Anachronism of Naval Administration", The Engineer, Vol. CXLI, (May, 1926).

Sadao, Saburi, "Japan's Position in the Far East", JRUSI, Vol. 74, (August, 1929).

Sansom, Sir George, "The Story of Singapore", Parts I and II, Journal of the United Service Institute of India, Vol. 74, (April and July, 1944).

Sato, Cdr. I., IJN, "The Naval Policy of Japan", BNA, (1927).

Schon, D., "Dynamic Conservatism", The Listener, Vol. 84, (November, 1970).

Sekine, Capt. G., IJN, "Japan's Case for Sea Power", Current History, Vol. 41, (November, 1934).

"Sentinel", "British Warships Building Resources", BNA, (1934).

Silverman, P.G., "The Ten Year Rule", JRUSI, Vol. 116, (March, 1971).

"Singapore", NR, Vol. XII, (February, 1924).

"Singapore, Menace to Asia", LD, no. 84, (February, 1925).

Sokolsky, G.W., "Why Fight Japan", Current History, Vol. 41, (February, 1935).

Spinks, L.N., "The Termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance", PHR, Vol. VI, (1937).

Stanbridge, Air Comdr. B.G.T., "The Chiefs of Staff Committee, 50 Years of Joint Direction", JRUSI, Vol. 118, (December, 1973).

Stone, F.G., "Reduction of Armaments, Our Military Position", 19C, Vol. XCI, (February, 1922).





Stuart, Lt.-Col. K., "Capital Ships vs. Air Attack", Can. Def. Quarterly, Vol. XIV, (1926).

Sturdee, Adm. F.C.D., RN, "The Importance of Battleships, Cruisers and Suitably Placed Bases for Maintaining Overseas Communications", JRUSI, Vol. 68, (November, 1923).

Sydenham, Col. H., "The Singapore Base", NR, Vol. XIII, (August, 1925).

Takagi, Cdr. S., IJN, "Japan and her Navy", BNA, (1935).

Temperley, H., "Disraeli and Cyprus", Eng. H.R., Vol. XLVI, (April and July, 1931).

Thursfield, Rear-Adm. H.E., "Fifteen Years of Naval Treaty Making", BNA, (1937).

-----, "Naval Events, 1936", BNA, (1937, 1938, 1939).

Thurston, Sir George, K.B.E., "The Capital Ships of the Future", BNA, (1933).

Tinker, Lt.-Cdr. C.A., USN, "The Naval Situation in the Pacific", BNA, (1928).

Vandenbosch, A., "Where the Dutch Fear Japan", CH, Vol. 41, (January, 1935).

Vinson, J.C., "The Drafting of the Four Power Treaty of the Washington Conference", Journal of Modern History, (March, 1928).

Walters, Lt.-Cdr. D.W., "The Philosophy and Conduct of Maritime War", Part I, 1815-1918, Journal of the Royal Naval Scientific Service, (May, 1958).

-----, "The Philosophy and Conduct of Maritime War", Part II, 1918-1945, Journal of the Royal Naval Scientific Service, (July, 1958).

Ward, R.E., "The Inside Story of the Pearl Harbor Plan", United States Naval Institute Proceedings, (December, 1951).

Watt, D.C., "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935: An Interim Judgement", Journal of Modern History, Vol. 27, (June, 1956).



Webb, Adm., Sir R., RN, "The Change in the Naval Situation", JRUSI, Vol. 75, (November, 1930).

Wilkinson, Capt. R.J., IA, "Singapore", JRUSI, Vol. 69, (November, 1924).

-----, "The Influence of Oil on Imperial Organization", JRUSI, Vol. 68, (February, 1923).

Woodhouse, M.S., "The Case for Singapore", Asiatic Review, Vol. 20, (January, 1924).

Wemyss, Lord, "And After Washington", 19C, March, 1922.

#### Collections:

Brassey's Naval Annual, London, 1886 - various years.

Documents on International Affairs, for the years 1922, 1932, 1936, 1937, 1938, Vol. I, 1939-46.

Survey of International Affairs, for the years 1920-23, 1924-34, 1935, Vol. I, 1936, 1937, 1938; Vols. II, III, 1939-45; Vol. I, "The Eve of War; Vol. II; "The Initial Triumph of the Axis".

Political and Strategic Interests of the United Kingdom, an Outline, 1939, RIIA.

Royal United Service Institution Journal, London, 1857-.

Japan Year Book, Tokyo, Year Book Office, for the years 1921-1941.

Jane's Fighting Ships, London, 1896-.

Mariner's Mirror, The, Cambridge 1911 - various years.

Naval Review, The, London, 1911 - R.U.S.I. Library.

London Daily Herald.

London Daily Mail.

London Daily News.

London Sunday Times.



London Times.

Manchester Guardian and Weekly.

The New York Times.

The Observer.

The New York Herald Tribune.

Japan Chronicle, Weekly Edition.





APPENDIX A

PERIOD BEFORE RELIEF OF SINGAPORE BY ROYAL NAVY

Any assessment of the British Naval Policy as it applied to the Far East must take into account what was euphemistically termed "The period before Relief" or the time that it would take the British Main Fleet to arrive at the base to relieve it.

In late 1919, the Admiralty perceiving the possible ending of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, raised the question of the establishment of a major naval base in the Far East. In the memorandum which was submitted to the CID, the Admiralty noted that at least three months would be required to re-establish British Naval superiority in the Far East in the event of an Anglo-Japanese conflict.<sup>1</sup>

This as Roskill notes,<sup>2</sup> appears to have been the origin of the "Ninety Days to Singapore thesis" which was to re-emerge on many occasions. Two years later the Naval Staff produced a comprehensive study of the logistics of the dispatch of a fleet to the Far East on the basis that war with Japan would break out in 1930.<sup>3</sup> Assuming the best conditions, the fleet fully fueled, fuel storage tanks built and stocked along the route, three days notice given before the declaration of war and good weather, the fleet could reach Singapore in 40 days via the Suez Canal. Soon after the Admiralty examined this document and accepted it as the basis for future planning.<sup>4</sup>

Over the next few years, argument raged over the



Singapore project. It was curtailed by the Labour Government under Ramsay MacDonald in 1924<sup>5</sup> and restarted by the Conservatives in 1925.

In January 1925, the CID appointed a Sub-Committee to examine the whole issue of the Singapore Defences under the Chairmanship of Lord Curzon, then Lord President of the Council.<sup>6</sup>

Naturally enough, the three services argued about which was the best means to defend the base, and usually it was the Army and Navy against Hugh Trenchard and his advocacy of the Air Force as the major weapon for defence of Imperial interests.<sup>7</sup>

In July, the CID had a pursual of the defences of Australian ports and based their calculations of the addition of a squadron of battle cruisers would be added to the Eastern fleet that the main fleet would arrive at Singapore within forty-two days of the outbreak of war.<sup>8</sup> It was a belief that the Admiralty adhered to for some time.<sup>9</sup> It was shortly after the Abyssinian Crisis and the increasing tension in Europe generally and the Far East that the period of relief came up for discussion once again. In April 1937, the CID examined a paper prepared by the COS on the subject.<sup>10</sup> During the meeting Chatfield outlined to the committee the basis of the Admiralty's calculations in computing the time required to move the fleet to the Far East. Ten days was required to concentrate the fleet, and allowing for fueling enroute the time taken to reach Singapore would be thirty-eight days via the Suez Canal, or fifty-six days via the Cape. If a further allowance of 14 days was made for bad weather, delays in fueling





and the like the trip increased to fifty-two days via the canal and seventy via Cape Town. Now the COS were recommending to increase the period before relief to seventy days, which Chatfield noted gave little margin for safety and placed a heavy burden on the bases defences to hold out. As Hankey pointed out, "No period of relief had been definitely laid down for Malaya", but "a period of forty-two days had been assumed". That assumption was now gone.

The following year the period before relief was again the subject for consideration by the CID.<sup>11</sup> One of the problems was the cost of building up supplies if the period before relief was to be extended. It was pointed out that to extend the period to 70 days would cost £3 million and to extend the period to 90 days, which was under consideration would cost the Treasury considerably more. In fact, the ODC had made the point that either the fleet moves east right away in which the 70 day period was valid, or Singapore be equipped to hold out for six months. The High Commissioner for Australia, Bruce, who was attending the meeting, told the committee that<sup>12</sup>

If the decision were taken now to fix the period before relief at 70 days, it would be realized that if war came, that the immediate dispatch of the fleet was essential, since as the COS pointed out, any delay in its arrival at Singapore after the end of the period before relief might jeopardize the whole security of the Empire by the loss of the port.

As discussion went on, the figure of ninety days was elaborated on, and it was based on the time taken for supply ships to arrive after the fleet had ended the Japanese seige, and that time was calculated at an extra 20 days. To Chatfield the issue was simple, the CID had to decide now "that nothing



must be allowed to stand in the way of the dispatch of the main fleet on the outbreak of war in which case a period before relief of seventy days would be correct". But, he went on, "if it were felt impossible to guarantee in advance the immediate dispatch of the fleet to Singapore - Singapore should be stocked up with six months supplies of all materials". This would allow the timing of the dispatch of the fleet to be opened as the base would be able to hold out for a considerable period of time. The meeting went on with Bruce pressing the British to improve the resources at Singapore, and the British, while agreeing to the importance of this action kept noting the cost involved. In the end, the period of seventy days before relief was agreed to.

Though the seventy day period was accepted, the reserves of stores and food to sustain the garrison and refurbish the fleet were not forthcoming and the seventy day period before relief was more a paper situation than a reality.<sup>13</sup>

However, the CID<sup>14</sup> did start to examine the possibility of realizing the period before relief to 90 days due to the supply convoy arriving 20 days after the fleet. As well, there was some doubts expressed about ninety days being sufficient as there was a chance that the supply convoy could not leave the United Kingdom until Z plus 30 days. This would raise the period before supplies could arrive at Singapore to 105 days. What they suggested was that planning be done on the basis of the fleet arriving between 70 to 90 days and the relief convoy between 90 to 105 days.

By early 1939, the DCNS. was suggesting that the JPSC





have a look at the Far Eastern situation with reference to the period before relief. He agreed that the period should be raised to 90 days and that immediate steps be taken to increase the reserves at Singapore to allow the base to hold out.<sup>15</sup> Still nothing was yet settled in respect to finalizing the period at 90 days.<sup>16</sup> The problem was shunted off to the COS for their consideration and in late May, 1939 they submitted their appreciation on the period before relief.<sup>17</sup> After reviewing the reasons that led to the acceptance of 70 days they noted that this had been based on a single-handed war against Japan. Now with the possibility looming of a two-ocean war against both Germany and Japan the old period of 70 days "is now inadequate in the light of altered circumstances" and therefore they recommended to raise the period before relief to 90 days.

Discussion on the period before relief went on during the month just prior to the outbreak of war. The JPCS.<sup>18</sup> recommended in a report that the period be extended to 105 days with stores and food sufficient to allow the garrison to hold out for 6 months. But for the moment the 90 day period remained, and the Admiralty was to approach the Treasury to get funds to increase naval stores on the basis of a 90 day period before the supply convoy arrived.

Soon after the High Commissioner for Australia, Bruce met with the First Lord of the Admiralty, the CMS, the Minister for Co-Ordination of Defence and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to discuss the dispatch of a fleet to the Far East.<sup>19</sup>

There were two items on the agenda - the first was





whether the old promises made by the British Government to dispatch a fleet to the Far East still held good and what size fleet would be sent. In the course of a sometimes acrimonious meeting the period before the relief of Singapore emerged. The Minister for Co-Ordination of Defence, Chatfield told Bruce that

The present reserves at Singapore were based on a period before relief of 70 days, and of a period before re-provisioning of 90 days.

In addition, Chatfield told Bruce that the Civil Administration of Malaya had been instructed to examine the implications of holding a six months' reserve of food at Singapore.<sup>20</sup>

Soon after the Secretary of State for Colonies dispatched a telegram to the Governor of the Straits Settlements<sup>21</sup> which outlined the reasons for the increase from 70 to ninety days of the period before relief. But the telegram went on

...it is necessary to contemplate a position in which the arrival of relieving fleet might be delayed for even longer period - i.e. up to six months...

Therefore the Governor was asked to look at the problems of stocking up stores for the civil population for a period of six months. At the same time the service departments would be making a similar investigation in respect to the military garrison. The Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas after receiving the Colonial Secretary's telegram sent back to London his own comments in respect to the difficulties of stocking up for six months.<sup>22</sup> In brief he stated that it was almost impossible due to lack of storage facilities to provision for a six month seige, as it was, 90 days was stretching what facilities were



available.

Four days after the outbreak of the Second World War, the COS.<sup>23</sup> took note of the First Sea Lord's opinion that due to the Soviet German Non-Aggression Treaty and the uncertain position of Italy that

...It is apparent that in the event of Japan entering the war the formation of a fleet of sufficient strength to proceed to the Far East and its passage to Singapore would be far more difficult and would take far longer than has usually been envisioned.

In the opinion of that naval staff "no certain period can be calculated but relief might well be delayed for six months". The CIGS, Lord Ironside, in a memo pointed out that the increase in the period before relief had repercussions that "effect the whole of the Far East"<sup>24</sup> and that the "Dominions who have continually been led to believe that a fleet would arrive at Singapore and thus safeguard their communications, within the period previously laid down."

The COS, on the 26th of September<sup>25</sup> submitted their appreciation of the period before relief and its prognoses were gloomy - looking at the previous recommended period of 105 days and the possible extension to six months they came to the conclusion that in a war the garrison could not hold out in its present state for so long a period. But there was little that could be done at the moment, the more pressing problems of a European war forced the Singapore issue into abeyance. However, the COS accepted that the period before relief should be calculated as six months. This period was to remain as the basis for planning up to the outbreak of war in 1941.





FOOTNOTES

1. Adm. Memo 21/10/19, Adm. 1/8572.
2. Roskill, Naval Policy, Op. Cit., p. 290.
3. PD 01633/21, May/21, Adm. 1/8607 also ODC. No. 63, 5/5/21, Cab 8/8.
4. Bd. Minute, 1352, 26/5/21, Adm. 167/64.
5. Cab. 21(24) 17/3/24.
6. CID, 193rd meeting, 5/1/25, Cab 2/4.
7. See the various memos, reports etc. of the Singapore Committee, S.P. (25) in Cab 16/63, CID. Meeting 2/4 and Second Interim Report CID 253-C, 23/10/25, Cab 16/63.
8. CID. 249-C, (Revised), 25/7/25, Cab. 16/63.
9. MO 2725. 16/11/25, Adm. 167/73.
10. CID. 444-C, COS. 557 March, 1939. Cab 53/30, CID. 292nd Meeting 15/4/37, Cab 2/6.
11. CID. 312th meeting, 4/3/38, Cab 2/7.
12. Ibid.
13. See VO 316/38, Adm. 1/9573.
14. CID. 312th Meeting March, 1938, Cab 2/7.
15. CID. 355, 2/5/39, Memo DCNS. Cab 5/9 and DPCP 48, Cab 37/89.
16. ODC. 698-M, 10/5/39, also ODC. 281st Meeting 15/3/39, Cab 5/9.
17. COS. 367, 30/5/39, Cab 55/15.
18. CID. 502-C, 6/6/39, Cab 5/9.
19. Doct. No. 12/1/21, 11/7/39, Cab 2/9.
20. CID. 364th Meeting, 6/7/39, Cab 2/9.
21. Tele 6214, 22/7/39, Cab 21/893.
22. Sir Shelton Thomas to Sir Malcolm MacDonald 3/8/39, Cab 80/3.
23. COS. (39)16, 7/9/39, Cab 80/1.



24. Memo C.I.G.S. 12/9/39, Cab 80/3.
25. C.O.S. (39)49, 26/9/39, Cab 80/3.



APPENDIX B

Preparation of Admiralty Estimates

The British financial year ran from April 1 to 31 March of the following year. To gain parliamentary approval for the navy estimates, they were presented to Parliament by the First Lord ( or the Parliamentary Secretary if the First Lord was a member of the House of Lords), early in March. However, the preparations for the estimates were well in hand by that date, and often preparations began immediately after the current year's estimates had been approved.

The navy estimates were divided into a number of categories: Vote 1. covered wages of officers, seamen, etc.; Vote 2. victualling and clothing, and so on down the list to shipbuilding, naval armaments, education, etc. It must be borne in mind that each vote was a separate compartment and the Admiralty could not transfer funds saved in say, Vote 3. (medical establishments, etc.), to a department that was covered by Vote 6. (scientific services).

The preparations for the estimates began with the heads of the various departments of the Admiralty estimating what it would cost to run their departments for the coming fiscal year. These were looked over by the "Superintending Lords" of the various departments. (2nd Sea Lord, Personnel Fourth, Victualling and Transport, etc.). Once the estimates had been approved by the "Superintending Lords", they would





be considered by the Finance Committee under the chairmanship of the Financial and Parliamentary Secretary in which the financial officers were members. The Superintending Lords had to justify their estimates before this Committee and usually they were reduced. The estimates, (known at this stage as the sketch estimates), then went before the full board of the Admiralty, who after scrutiny, modifications, and possible reductions, approved them. At this point they were ready to be presented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the First Lord. Along with the sketch estimates, the First Lord attached a long letter justifying the figures. From the time that the sketch estimates were submitted ( in December), to the time when they went before the Cabinet for final approval, a lengthy, often protracted amount of correspondence went between the Treasury and the Admiralty. Part of it concerned the shadow cut, or as it became known in the 1930's, the overhead cut: the reduction in the estimates based on past experience that showed that the estimates were often too high due to work in hand not coming to completion in time, and thus contractors not claiming their costs during the financial year. The Admiralty accepted these overhead cuts on the basis that a supplementary estimate be provided if the cuts proved to be too high. The shadow cut accepted, the sketch estimate went before the Cabinet where the Chancellor would



present them. This was usually done in early January which gave time to have the estimates printed, and for the First Lord to prepare for the Parliamentary debate in March. The major area where argument over the estimates usually occurred was the construction programme. The state of the fleet, the conditions of its ships, and the changing requirements for ships, was always under review. When a new class of ship, or the building of a new one of an existing class, became necessary, Staff Requirements for such a ship would be forwarded to the Admiralty Board who ( if it approved of the requirement), would ask for technical departments to produce a sketch design and the legend (details of performance), with a rough estimate of cost. After the sketch design had been approved, the cost would be tied down more accurately. The cost of the whole construction programme would be assessed, and might be spread over several years. The proportion for the coming financial year would be included in the estimates for the coming year under the appropriate vote heading. The construction programme with estimated cost was usually submitted to the Cabinet independently of the total estimates. It was not uncommon for the Cabinet to reduce or scrap the programme entirely. Assuming that it did gain approval, however, the Admiralty would place contracts for new ships late in the year so that the cost





would be carried on votes to come, which deferred expenditure to the latest possible time. The disadvantage was that ships often would not come into service when they were required.

For a fuller explanation, see S. Roskill, Op.Cit., pp. 204-210.

For the role of the Treasury, see Lord Bridges, The Treasury, London, 1964. For some views of the Treasury's parsimony,

see L. S. Amery, My Political Life, Vol. II, London, 1954, p.

358, Chalmers, Op. Cit., p. 371-3, 395-405. For ship construction, see E. J. Marsh, British Destroyers, London, 1966.



APPENDIX C

Principal Naval Appointments, 1918-1942

First Lords of the Admiralty

	<u>Dates Served</u>
Sir Eric C. Geddes	20/7/17 - 16/1/19
Viscount Long	16/1/19 - 18/2/21
Arthur Hamilton, Baron Lee	18/2/21 - 31/10/22
Leopold Amery	31/10/22 - 28/1/24
Viscount Chelmsford	28/1/24 - 7/11/24
Viscount Bridgemen	7/11/24 - 10/6/29
Earl Alexander	10/6/29 - 27/8/31
Sir Joseph Chamberlain	27/8/31 - 9/11/31
Viscount Monsell	9/11/31 - 6/6/36
Viscount Templewood	6/6/36 - 28/5/37
Viscount Norwich	28/5/37 - 27/10/38
Earl Stanhope	27/10/38 - 3/9/39
Winston S. Churchill	3/9/39 - 10/5/40
Viscount Alexander	12/5/40 - 29/5/45

First Sea Lords

Admiral Sir Rosslyn E. Wemyss	10/1 /18 - 1/11/19
Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty	1/11/19 - 30/ 7/27
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles E. Madden	30/7/27 - 30/7/30



Admiral Sir Frederick L. Field	30/7 /30 - 21/1 /33
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Ernle Chatfield	21/1 /33 - 17/11/38
Admiral Sir Roger R.C. Backhouse	17/11/38 - 15/6 /39
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound	16/6 /39 - 15/10/43

Second Sea Lords

V/Adm Sir Herbert Heath	27/9 /17 - 31/3 /19
V/Adm Sir Montague Browning	31/3 /19 - 30/9 /20
V/Adm Sir Henry Oliver	30/9 /20 - 15/8 /24
V/Adm Sir Michael Culme-Seymour	15/8/ 24 - 2/4/25
V/Adm The Hon. Sir Hubert Brand	2/4 /25 - 15/8 /27
V/Adm Sir Michael Hodges	15/8 /27 - 26/5 /30
Admiral Sir Cyril Fuller	26/5 /30 - 31/8 /32
V/Adm Dudley Pound	31/8 /32 - 30/9/ 35
V/Adm Sir Martin Dunbar-Nasmith	30/9 /35 - 30/9 /38
Admiral Sir Charles Little	30/9 /38 - 1/6 /41
V/Adm W.J. Whitworth	1/6 /41 - 8/3 /44

Third Sea Lords

Capt Charles M. de Bartolome	17/6 /18 - 2/7 /19
R/Adm Sir William Nicholson	2 /7 /19 - 15/4 /20
R/Adm Frederick Field	15/4 /20 - 15/5 /23
R/Adm Cyril Fuller	15/5 /23 - 30/4/25
R/Adm Sir Ernle Chatfield	30/4 /25 - 1/11/28
R/Adm Roger Backhouse	1/11/28 - 1/3 /32





R/Adm Charles M. Forbes	1/3 /32 - 23/4 /34
V/Adm Reginald Henderson	23/4 /34 - 1/3 /39
R/Adm Bruce Fraser	1/3 /39 - 22/5 /42

Deputy Chiefs of Naval Staff

V/Adm Sir Sydney Fremantle	10/1 /18 - 1 /5 /19
R/Adm James Ferguson	1/5 19 - 4/8 /19
V/Adm Sir Osmond de B. Brock	4/8/19 - 1/11/21
V/Adm Sir Roger Keyes	1/11/21 -15/5 /25
V/Adm Sir Frederick L. Field	15/5/ 25 - 1/5 /28
V/Adm William Fisher	1/5 /28 -30/6 /30
V/Adm Frederick Dreyer	30/6 /30 - 9/1 /33
V/Adm Charles Little	9/1 /33 -29/10/35
V/Adm William James	29/10/35 -14/11/38
R/Adm Andrew Cunningham	14/11/38 - 1/6 /39
R/Adm Tom Phillips	1/6 /39 -21/10/41
V/Adm H.R. Moore	21/10/41 - 7/6 /43



APPENDIX D

MEMBERS OF THE CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

	<u>Dates Served</u>
General the Earl of Cavan,	17/7/23 - 18/2/26
Admiral of the Fleet The Earl Beatty	17/7/23 - 30/7/27
Marshal of the Royal Air Force The Viscount Trenchard	17/7/23 - 31/12/29
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Madden	31/7/27 - 30/7/30
Field Marshal Sir George Milne	19/2/26 - 18/2/33
Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir John Salmond	1/1/30 - 31/3/33
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Frederick Field	31/7/30 - 21/1/33
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Ernle Chatfield	22/1/33 - 6/9/38
Field Marshal Sir Archibald Montgomery-Massingberd	19/2/33 - 6/4/36
Air Chief Marshal Sir William Salmond	1/4/33 - 27/4/33
Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir John Salmond	28/4/33 - 22/5/33
Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Edward Ellington	23/5/33 - 1/9/37
Field Marshal Sir Cyril Deverell	7/4/36 - 5/12/37
Marshal of the Royal Air Force The Lord Newall	2/9/37 - 24/10/40



General The Viscount Gort	6/12/37 - 3/9/39
Admiral Sir Roger Backhouse	7/9/38 - 11/6/39
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound	12/6/39 - 14/10/43
General Sir Edmund Ironside	4/9/39 - 26/5/40
Field Marshal Sir John Dill	27/5/40 - 24/12/41
Marshal of the Royal Air Force The Viscount Portal	25/10/40 - 31/12/45





## APPENDIX E

### List of Tables

- Table I.  
Costs of Various Classes of British Battleships,  
1909 - 1941 .....
- Table II.  
The Cut-Back of Defence Spending .....
- Table III.  
The Peace Strength in 1931 of Naval War Material
- Table IV.  
British Naval Strength, 1935 .....
- Table V.  
Comparison of Table A (1) of D.R.C. (Summarised)  
with Alternative Suggestion put forward by  
Chancellor of Exchequer .....
- Table VI.  
Strength of Opposing Naval Forces in the Far  
East, June 1937 .....
- Table VII.  
Strength of Fleets at June 1937 and at the end of  
1939 .....
- Table VIII.  
Length of Time that Various Classes of Ships can  
operate in an Area "X" Miles from their Base,  
keeping 33 per cent of Endurance in Reserve for  
Action, high speed Steaming, etc. (i.e., proceeding  
to and from the Area and operating on 67 per cent  
of Endurance ). .....
- Table IX.  
Heavy Ship Strength available to meet the German  
Fleet and nine modernised Japanese heavy Ships .
- Table X.  
Forecast of Fleet Strengths on 1st April 1939 ..
- Table XI.  
Dates of Completion and Reconstruction of British  
and Japanese Capital Ships .....
- Table XII.  
Comparison of Capital Ship Strengths .....
- Table XIII.  
R or Revenge Class Battleships (Dreadnought) ...



Table XIV.

Ships planned to be sent to the Far East under  
the Terms of the Singapore Conference .....

Table XV.

Ships planned to be sent to the Far East under  
the Terms of ABC-1 Plan .....

Table XVI.

British Warships proposed for Far Eastern Fleet  
by First Sea Lord .....

Table XVII.

Japanese Naval Ships, 7th December 1941 .....



TABLE I

COSTS OF VARIOUS CLASSES OF BRITISH BATTLESHIPS, 1909-1941

<u>Class</u>	<u>Laid Down</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Cost (millions £)</u>
Colossus	1909	1911	1.54
Hercules	1909	1911	1.53
<u>Orion</u>	1909	1912	
Conqueror			1.86
Monarch			1.89
Orion			1.92
Thunderer			1.89
<u>King George V.</u>	1911	1913	1.96, average cost
Ajax			
Audacious			
Centurion			
King George V.			
<u>Queen Elizabeth</u>	1913	1915	3.0, average cost
Barham			
Malaya			
Queen Elizabeth			
Valiant			
Warspite			
<u>Revenge Class</u>	1913	1917	2.5, average cost
Ramillies			
Resolution			
Revenge			
Royal Oak			
Royal Sovereign			
<u>Renown</u>	1915	1916	3.5, average cost
Renown			
Repulse			
Hood	1916	1920	6.02
<u>Nelson</u>	1922	1927	
Nelson			7.5
Rodney			7.6





TABLE I con't

<u>King George V.</u>	1937	1941-42	8.5, average cost
Anson			
Duke of York			
Howe			
King George V.			
Prince of Wales			
<u>Vanguard</u>	1941	1946	9.0

Jane's Fighting Ships, 1909-1945  
O. Parkes, British Battleships,  
London, 1956.  
Brassey's Naval Annual, 1909-1945.



TABLE II

The cut-back of defence spending is illustrated by the following:<sup>1</sup>

Expenditure on maintenance, stores, repairs and re-equipment for the Royal Navy.

Year Enging March 31st.	Total (Incl. New Const.) Millions	New Construction
1924	11.8	5.0
1925	13.0	6.0
1926	14.1	5.4
1927	16.0	8.3
1928	16.3	9.0
1929	15.0	8.5
1930	14.4	7.7
1931	10.7	5.0
1932	10.3	4.8
1933	10.7	6.0

%± Defence Spending<sup>2</sup>

United Kingdom	-19.6	1925 to 32-33
U.S.S.R.	+197.0	1925 to 33-34
Japan	+110.8	1925 to 34-35
France	+109.0	1925 to 33-34
Germany	+12.3	1925 to 33-34
U.S.A.	+10.3	1925 to 33-34
Italy	+9.7	1925 to 33-34

1. Michael Postan, British War Production, HMSO, 1952, p.s.  
 Total expenditure, U.K., 1925 = £110,600,000  
 1931-32 = £88,900,000 -21.7%

2. See CP(34)205 28/2/34.



TABLE III.

## THE PEACE STRENGTH IN 1931 OF NAVAL WAR MATERIAL

Strengths of Fleets, 1st March, 1932.

(Figures given, except those in heavy type, include built, building and authorised.)

Categories, as in Draft Disarmament Convention.

		United States.	France.	British Commonwealth.	Italy.	Japan.	Germany.
Capital ships .. .. . (i)	Numbers tonnage ..	15 453,500	9 185,925	15 174,750	4 86,533	9 296,070	8 101,072
	Authorised by Treaty ..	525,000	175,000	525,000	175,000	315,000	—
Aircraft carriers .. .. .	Numbers tonnage ..	4 90,086	1 22,146	6 115,350	—	4 88,870	—
	Authorised by Treaty ..	135,000	60,000	135,000	60,000	81,000	—
(c) Cruisers—(i) (Guns of more than 6·1 in.) ..	Numbers tonnage ..	15 of 150,000	7 of 70,000	15 of 146,800	7 of 70,000	12 of 108,400	—
	Authorised by Treaty ..	180,000	—	146,800	—	108,400	—
	Numbers tonnage ..	13 91,193	—	40 197,875	—	22 101,535	—
	Authorised by Treaty ..	143,500	—	192,260	—	100,450	—
(d) Light surface vessels.	Cruisers—(ii) (Guns of less than 6·1 in.) ..						
	Numbers tonnage ..	259 259,664	103 198,233	173 197,361	104 166,609	107 125,435	38 64,591
	Authorised by Treaty ..	150,000	—	150,000	—	105,500	—
	Numbers tonnage ..	103 77,610	110 97,875	63 81,831	70 50,928	71 77,812	—
Submarines .. .. .	Authorised by Treaty ..	52,700	—	52,700	—	52,700	—
	Numbers tonnage ..	103 77,610	110 97,875	63 81,831	70 50,928	71 77,812	—
Naval Aircraft** .. .. .	Sea borne .. .. .	689	45	261	25	115	—
	Shore borne .. .. .	311	266	—	117	286	—

CP 100(31), also CID 1047-B 14/4/31, Cab 4/21





TABLE IV

BRITISH NAVAL STRENGTH, 1935

*Completed Ships.*

Class of Ship.	British Commonwealth.	Japan.	Germany.
Capital Ships ...	3 modern 3 modernised 9 non-modernised <hr/> 15 Total	2 modern 7 modernised <hr/> 9 Total	2 new 3 <i>Deutschlands</i> <hr/> 5 Total (excluding 4 very old ships)
Aircraft Carriers ...	6 <sup>(1)</sup>	5 <sup>(2)</sup>	1
8-inch Cruisers ...	15	12 <sup>(4)</sup>	3
Large 6-inch Cruisers	12 <sup>(3)</sup>	6	0 <sup>(*)</sup>
Small 6-inch Cruisers	28 <sup>(*)</sup>	18	6 <sup>(*)</sup>
Destroyers ...	144 <sup>(7)</sup>	93 <sup>(*)</sup>	38
Submarines ...	45	39 <sup>(*)</sup>	38

NOTES.—It is assumed that British Commonwealth and Japan adhere to London Naval Treaty provisions ; this affects 6-inch cruiser, destroyer and submarine totals.

(<sup>1</sup>) Assumes *Argus* scrapped.

(<sup>2</sup>) Assumes *Hosho* scrapped.

(<sup>3</sup>) Assumes 4 *Hawkins* class retained rearmed with 6-inch guns.

(<sup>4</sup>) Excludes 7 old cruisers classed as special service and coast defence vessels.

(<sup>5</sup>) Assumes 8 6-inch cruisers scrapped to comply with London Naval Treaty.

(<sup>6</sup>) It is probable that about two more new cruisers (size unknown) may be completed.

(<sup>7</sup>) Includes 16 "V" large type.

(<sup>8</sup>) Includes 23 large type and excludes 20 torpedo boats 500-600 tons each.

(<sup>9</sup>) Assumes about 17 submarines not yet over-age are scrapped prematurely to comply with London Naval Treaty.



TABLE V

SECRET

Comparison of Table A (1) of D.R.C. (summarised) with alternative suggestion put forward by Chancellor of Exchequer.

Service and Scope, &c., of Proposal.	1934/5.	1935/6.	1936/7.	1937/8.	1938/9.	Total to 1939/0.	Remainder to complete
NAVY: Singapore and Deficiencies (excluding shipbuilding) { D.R.C. Alternative	£m. 2.5 2.1	£m. 5.0 3.0	£m. 4.8 3.1	£m. 4.5 2.7*	£m. 4.3 2.1*	£m. 21.1 13.0	£m. 3.9 12.0
ARMY: Singapore and Deficiencies { D.R.C. Alternative	7.4 1.9	7.7 4.3	8.1 4.8	8.3 3.8*	8.5 4.3*	40.0 19.1	5.0 25.9
AIR: Deficiencies Fleet Air Arm Deficiencies generally { D.R.C. D.R.C. Alternative	.2 — .2	{ 1.2 .6 2.0	{ 2.1 1.2 4.5	{ 2.0 1.6 5.5	{ 3.8 2.1 6.0	{ 10.2 5.5 16.2	{ 2.0 3.0 5.5
TOTALS (excluding shipbuilding) { D.R.C. Alternative	10.1 4.2	14.5 9.3	16.2 12.4	17.3 12.0	18.7 12.4	76.8 50.3	13.9 43.4
NAVAL SHIPBUILDING { D.R.C. Alternative	10.7 10.7	12.3 11.2	14.4 11.2	14.7 11.2	14.9 11.2	67.0† 55.5†	†

\* Drop due to completion of Singapore.

† Unspecified, but clearly very large if the battle fleet is renewed in 10 years.

‡ The expenditure on shipbuilding in 1933 was £m9.3. The additional expenditure on shipbuilding over the five years provided in the D.R.C. figures is accordingly £m20.5, making the total additional expenditure £m97.3. The corresponding figures put forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer are £m9.0 and £m59.3.



**TABLE VI**

*Strength of Opposing Naval Forces in the Far East, June 1937.*

Class of Ship.	British.			Japanese maximum concentration.
	At outbreak of hostilities.	During period before relief if East Indies, African and Australasian squadrons are added to China Squadron.	After arrival of Main Fleet.* (Subsequent reinforcements.)	
Battleships ... ..	...	...	10	9
Battle Cruisers ... ..	...	...	2	...
8-in. Cruisers ... ..	4.	7	11	12
6-in. Cruisers (new) ... ..	...	4	11	17
6-in. Cruisers (old) ... ..	2	5	8 (14)	...
Aircraft Carriers ... ..	1	1	4	5
Seaplane Carriers ... ..	...	...	1	3
Destroyers ... ..	11	14	73 (36)	1,000/1,500 tons 75 Under 1,000 tons 33
Submarines ... ..	15	15	18 (9)	63
Minelayers ... ..	1	1	1	1

\* These figures are likely to be the total of the units able to sail with the peace-time active service fleet. The figures in brackets indicate reinforcements that might reach the Far East within 2 months of the arrival of the peace-time active service units. 2 Battleships, 1 Battle Cruiser, 1 Aircraft Carrier and 2—8-in. Cruisers of the British Fleet are undergoing large repairs, and will not be available for several months.

DP(P)5 14/6/37





TABLE VII

*Strength of Fleets at June 1937 and at the end of 1939.*

Class of Ship.	British Empire.		France.		Germany.		Japan.		Italy.		Russia.	
	1937.	1939.	1937.	1939.	1937.	1939.	1937.	1939.	1937.	1939.	1937.	1939.
Battleships ...	12	12	9	7	...	2	9	9	4	5	3	3
Battle Cruisers ...	3	3	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Armoured Ships...	...	...	...	...	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Aircraft Carriers ...	5	8	1	1	...	2	5	7	...	...	...	...
8-in. Cruisers ...	15	15	7	7	...	3	12	12	7	7	...	3
6-in. Cruisers ...	35	60	10	13	6	8	23	25	15	16	5	3
Contre-Torpilleurs ...	...	...	30	36	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Large Destroyers ...	146	190	26	40	12	28	76	95	46	51	18	17
Small Destroyers ...	14	10	10	19	12	12	23	30	60	47	39	60
Submarines ...	52	62	80	88	36	70	57	66	84	83	111	169

Notes on 1939 figures—

1. Table excludes pre-Dreadnoughts and pre-war Cruisers.
2. Table assumes normal building and scrapping programmes.
3. 36 German submarines are of 250 tons. About 60 Russian submarines are of 150 tons.
4. 1 British Aircraft Carrier and 2 British 8-in. Cruisers will be undergoing long refit.
5. Table includes ships building in 1939 that are within 8 weeks of completion.
6. The second German battleship will probably not be available until the spring of 1940.



TABLE VIII

Length of time that the various classes of ships can operate in an area "X" miles from their base, keeping 33 per cent of endurance in reserve for action, high speed steaming, &c. (i.e., proceeding to and from the area and operating on 67 per cent. of endurance).

	"X" =						"X" =					
	500	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000	500	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000
Speeds whilst on passage and operating: Capital ships 12 knots; other classes 14 knots.												
Speeds whilst on passage and operating: Capital ships 14 knots; other classes 16 knots.												
Nelson ...	Days. 24	Days. 20½	Days. 17	Days. 13½	Days. 10	Days. 6½	Days. 17½	Days. 14½	Days. 12	Days. 9	Days. 6	Days. 3
Q.E. (Modernised) ...	16	12½	9	5½	2	...	13	10	7	4	1	...
Royal Sovereign ...	9½	6	2½	...	...	...	6½	3½	2½	...	...	...
Hood ...	10	6½	3	...	...	...	8½	5½	...	...	...	...
Repulse ...	8½	5	1½	1	...	...	6	3	2	...	...	...
Conqueror ...	9½	6½	4	...	...	...	7½	4½	...	...	...	...
Various ...	10½	7½	4½	1½	...	...	8½	5½	...	...	...	...
Black ...	12	9	6	3	...	...	13	10½	...	...	...	...
Kent and London ...	17	14	11	8	5	2	13	10½	8	5½	3	...
Norfolk ...	17½	14½	11½	8½	5½	2½	13½	11	8½	5½	3	...
Leander (Modernised) ...	15½	12½	9½	6½	3½	...	11	8	5½	3	...	...
Leander ...	13	10	7	4	1	...	10½	7	4½	2	...	...
Arethusa ...	10½	7½	4½	1½	...	...	9½	6½	3½	...	...	...
Scathampton ...	14	11	8	5	...	...	10	7	4½	2	...	...
B Cruisers ...	7	4	1	...	...	...	5	2	...	...	...	...
D Cruisers ...	6	3	...	...	...	...	4½	1½	...	...	...	...
Carisle ...	4½	1½	...	...	...	...	3½	1	...	...	...	...
Grenville ...	7½	4½	1½	...	...	...	5½	3½	...	...	...	...
Exmouth ...	8	5	2	...	...	...	6	4	...	...	...	...
Codrington ...	5½	2½	...	...	...	...	4½	1½	...	...	...	...
Duncan ...	7	4	1	...	...	...	5½	3½	...	...	...	...
Scott leaders ...	2½	...	...	...	...	...	1½	...	...	...	...	...
H and G Destroyers ...	7	4	1½	...	...	...	5½	3½	...	...	...	...
H and F Destroyers ...	7½	5	2	...	...	...	6	4	...	...	...	...
J Destroyers ...	7	4	1	...	...	...	5½	3½	...	...	...	...
K Destroyers ...	5½	2½	...	...	...	...	4½	1½	...	...	...	...
L Destroyers ...	5	2	...	...	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...
M Destroyers ...	2½	...	...	...	...	...	1½	...	...	...	...	...



TABLE IX

**Heavy ship strength available to meet the German Fleet,  
and nine modernised Japanese heavy ships.**

Period.	German Fleet.	Our Fleet at Home.	Our Far Eastern Fleet.	Out of action (Modernising).
Summer 1937 to Spring 1938	3 "Deutschlands"	Hood Repulse	2 Nelsons Warspite (fully modernised) Malaya, Royal Oak (partly modernised) Barham 4 Revenges (unmodernised)  Total: 10 ships.	Renown Valiant Queen Elizabeth
Spring 1938 to Summer 1939	3 "Deutschlands" 2 "Scharnhorsts"	Hood Repulse Malaya Barham	2 Nelsons Warspite Royal Oak 4 Revenges  Total: 8 ships.	Renown Valiant Queen Elizabeth
Summer 1939 to Spring 1940	3 "Deutschlands" 2 "Scharnhorsts" 2—35,000 ton battle-ships*	Hood Repulse Renown 2 Nelsons	3 Warspites Malaya Royal Oak Barham 4 Revenges  Total: 10 ships.	

\* 1 at the end of 1939; 1 in the Spring of 1940.

The most serious shortage would be in the non heavy class of warship. The demands for cruisers for the fleet would leave none available for trade protection, and in such circumstances the Admiralty would have to rely on the seventy-four armed merchant cruisers that would come into service at the outbreak of war. In other classes of ships the distribution would be: in 1939, two air craft carriers in Home waters, four sent to the Far East, cruisers, fifty five sent to Singapore, eighteen left in Home waters.

COS 594 4/6/37 Cab 53/32





TABLE X

*Forecast of Fleet Strengths on 1st April, 1939.*

	British Empire.	France.	Ger- many.	Italy.	Japan.	Anglo- French Total.	German- Italian- Japanese Total.
Capital Ships ... ..	12(a)	7(b)	2	2	10	19	14
Armoured Ships ... ..	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
Aircraft Carriers ... ..	6(c)	1	...	...	6	7	6
8 in. Gun Cruisers ... ..	13(d)	7	2	7	12	29	21
6 in. Gun Cruisers ... ..	41(e)	11	6	15	25	52	46
Contre-Torpilleurs ... ..	...	32	...	...	...	32	...
Large Destroyers (1,500-1,850 tons) ... ..	16	...	20	23	31	16	74
Other Modern Destroyers ...	81	38	24	61	52	119	120
Older Destroyers and T.Ba. ...	63(f)	2	6	39	39	65	38
Submarines ... ..	54	80	57	105	62	154	223
Motor Torpedo Boats ... ..	18	10	20	60(g)	3	28	53
Escort Vessels... ..	30	25	10	9	...	55	19
A.A. Ships ... ..	4(h)	...	...	...	...	4	...

(a) Of these *Hood* and *Revenge* may be at 1-2 months' notice. Three other ships not included in this number are undergoing large repairs and modernisation.

(b) Two are old.

(c) Two of these are at more than 14 days' notice; maintenance personnel and aircraft will probably not be available for equipping all these ships fully.

(d) Two others are undergoing large repairs.

(e) Of these, 8 will be at more than 14 days' notice.

(f) Nine of these are at more than 14 days' notice.

(g) There are 60 in commission, of which only about 40 are modern seaworthy boats. In addition, there are up to 300 boats capable of carrying torpedoes and a small gun.

(h) One of these is at more than 14 days' notice.

DP(P)48 Cab 16/183A,

SAC 13, April/39, Cab 16/209

SAC 16, 5/4/39, Cab 16/209

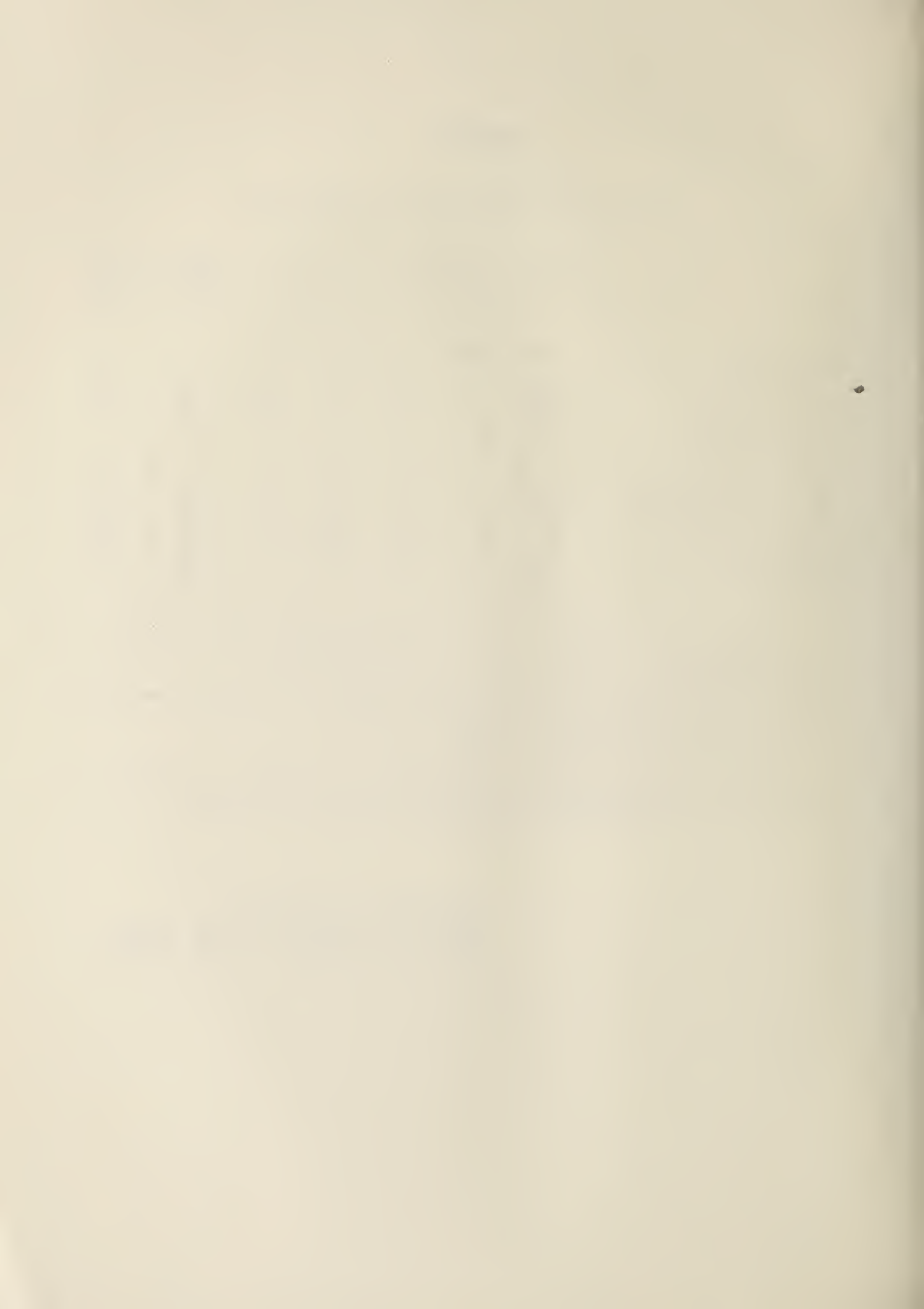


TABLE XI

*Dates of Completion and Reconstruction of British and Japanese Capital Ships.*

A. *British.*

<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Completed. Reconstructed.</i>				<i>Remarks.</i>
16-in. ...	<i>Nelson</i> ...	...	1927			
	<i>Rodney</i> ...	...	1927			
15-in. (long range)	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	1915	...	(1941)		
	<i>Valiant</i> ...	...	1916	...	1939	
	<i>Warspite</i> ...	...	1915	...	1937	
	<i>Hood</i> ...	...	1920	...	...	
	<i>Renown</i> ...	...	1916	...	1939	
15-in. (short range)	<i>Malaya</i> ...	...	1916	...	1936	Partially reconstructed, but elevation of guns not increased.
	<i>Barham</i> ...	...	1915	...	1934	
	<i>Repulse</i> ...	...	1916	...	1936	
	<i>Royal Sovereign</i>	1916				
	<i>Revenge</i> ...	...	1916			
	<i>Resolution</i> ...	...	1916			
	<i>Ramillies</i> ...	...	1917			

B. *Japanese.*

<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Completed.</i>		<i>Reconstructed.</i>		<i>Remarks.</i>
15.75-in. ...	<i>Mutsu</i> ...	...	1921	...	Late 1933-	7-in. deck armour. Converted to oil burning. New boilers and engines. Guns of new pattern and increased elevation. Bulged.
	<i>Nagato</i> ...	...	1920	...	Jan. 1936	
14.2-in. ...	<i>Hyuga</i> ...	...	1918	...	1934-1936	New boilers, turbines modified. New guns and believed elevation increased. New armoured deck. Bulged.
	<i>Ise</i> ...	...	1917	...	1934-1936	
	<i>Fuso</i> ...	...	1915	...	1931-1933	New boilers. Oil; geared turbines of increased H.P.; guns re-lined and elevation increased. New armoured deck. Bulged.
	<i>Yamashiro</i> ...	...	1917	...	1932-1934	As <i>Fuso</i> but guns of new pattern.
	<i>Kongo</i> ...	...	1913	...	Nov. 1934- Jan. 1937	New boilers. Oil. New engines. New pattern guns and elevation increased. Bulged.
	<i>Kirishima</i> ...	...	1915	...	May 1931- June 1936	
	<i>Haruna</i> ...	...	1915	...	1933-1935	
	<i>Hiei</i> ...	...	1914	...	...	Demilitarised 1932. Remilitarised 1937-Autumn 1939. No details known but presumed similar to <i>Kongo</i> .

NOTE:—

1. Secondary armament in some cases converted to A.A.
2. Recent report states "all modernised ships' speed increased by 10 per cent." This probably means speed has been increased from that when taken in hand for modernisation, and ships are now thought to be capable of their original speed.
3. Those ships for which the months of being taken in hand and completion of reconstruction are not given, took about two years to modernise.



TABLE XII

*Comparison of Capital Ship Strengths.*

<i>Possible British Far Eastern Fleet in 1942.</i>	<i>Estimated Japanese Fleet in 1942.</i>
14-inch—	16-inch—
<i>Horn</i> (1942)	One 40,000 tons (1942)
<i>Anson</i> (1941)	One 40,000 tons (1941)
<i>Duke of York</i> (1941)	One 35,000 tons (1941)
<i>Prince of Wales</i> (1940)	One 35,000 tons (1940)
<i>King George V</i> (1940)	
16-inch—	15.75-inch—
<i>Nelson</i>	<i>Mutsu</i>
<i>Rodney</i>	<i>Nagato</i>
15-inch (Long Range)—	14.2-inch—
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i> (1941)	<i>Hiyuga</i>
<i>Valiant</i>	<i>Ise</i>
<i>Warspile</i>	<i>Yamashiro</i>
	<i>Fuso</i>
<i>Hood</i>	<i>Kongo</i>
<i>Renown</i>	<i>Kirishima</i>
	<i>Haruna</i>
	<i>Hiyoi</i>
15-inch (Short Range)—	
<i>Malaya</i>	Plus possibly 4 armoured ships with
<i>Barham</i>	12-inch guns
<i>Repulse</i>	
Total 15	Total 14, plus armoured ships with
	12-inch guns
<i>Additions after 1942.</i>	<i>Estimated.</i>
1943—	1943—
15-inch. <i>Vanguard</i>	16-inch. One 40,000 tons
1944—	1944—
16-inch. <i>Lion, Temeraire</i>	16-inch. One 40,000 tons
Total 16	Total 16, plus armoured ships with
	12-inch guns





TABLE XIII

3 OR REVENGE CLASS BATTLESHIPS (DREADNAUGHT)

Name	Laid Down	Completed	Armament	Speed	Fuel	Displacement	Last Refit
Ramillies	12/11/13	Sept. '17	8x15	20.5 kts.	oil	33,000	1932-33
Resolution	29/11/13	Oct. '16	8x15	20.5	oil	31,200	1930-31
Revenge	22/12/13	March '16	8x15	21.9	oil	30,750	1936
Royal Oak	15/1/14	May '16	8x15	20.5	oil	31,200	1934-35
Royal Sovereign	15/1/14	May '16	8x15	20.5	oil	31,200	1937

All had 14th Armourer Belt, 1"-4" Deck Armour.



TABLE XIV

SHIPS PLANNED TO BE SENT TO THE FAR EAST UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SINGAPORE

CONFERENCE

<u>Battle Cruisers</u>	<u>Displacement</u>	<u>Speed(Kts)</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Recons't</u>	<u>Armament</u>	<u>Fuel</u>	<u>No. of aircraft</u>
Renown	32,000	36.5	1916	1936	6x15"	oil	

Air Craft Carriers

Arc Royal	22,000	30.3	1938	--	16x4.5"	oil	70
Eagle	22,600	24.0	1924	--	9x6"	oil	20

Cruisers Class

Shropshire	9,850	32.25	1929	--	8x8"	oil	
London							
Sheffield	9,100	32.0	1937	--	12x6"	oil	
Southampton							
Glasgow	9,100	32.0	1937	--	12x6"	oil	
Southampton							
Emerald	7,550	33.0	1926	--	7x6"	oil	
Enterprise	7,580	33.0	1926	--	7x6"	oil	
Colombo	4,200	29.0	1919	--	5x6"	oil	
Carlisle							
Capetown	4,200	29.0	1922	--	5x6"	oil	
Carlisle							
Caledon	4,180	29.0	1917	--	5x6"	oil	
Caledon							
Ceres	4,290	29.0	1917	--	5x6"	oil	

Jane's Fighting Ships, 1940.  
British Battleships, Op. Cit.  
N. Polmar, Aircraft Carriers,  
London, 1969.

Brassey's Naval Annual, 1939.  
S. L. Poole, Cruiser, A History, 1889-1960,  
London, 1970.



TABLE XV

SHIPS PLANNED TO BE SENT TO THE FAR EAST UNDER THE TERMS OF ABC-1 PLAN

	<u>Displacement</u>	<u>Speed(Kts)</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Armament</u>	<u>Fuel</u>
Nelsons(2)	38,000	23	1927	9x16"	oil
R(Revenge) Class (3)	31,200	20.5-21.9	1916-17	8x15"	oil

Air Craft Carriers \*

Arc Royal  
Eagle

Cruisers

Sheffield  
Shropshire  
Glasgow  
Ceres  
Colombo  
Emerald  
Enterprise  
Cape Town  
Caledon

\* see Table XIV.

British Battleships, Op.Clt.  
Brassey's, Op.Clt.  
Jane's Fighting Ships, Op.Clt.  
Poole, Op.Clt.  
Polmar, Op.Clt.





TABLE XVI

BRITISH WARSHIPS PROPOSED FOR FAR EASTERN FLEET BY FIRST SEA LORD

<u>Battleships</u>	<u>Displacement</u>	<u>Armament</u>	<u>Speed(Kts)</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>No.A/C</u>	<u>Reconstructed</u>
Renown	37,000	6x15"	29	1916		1936
Nelson	38,000	9x16"	23	1927		Dec. '41-May '42
Rodney	28,900	9x16"	23	1927		1938
<u>R Class</u>						
Royal Sovereign		8x15"	21.5	1916		--
Ramillies	33,000	8x15"	20.5	1917		--
Resolution		8x15"	220	1916		--
Revenge	30,750	8x15"	21.9	1916		--
<u>Carriers</u>						
Hermes	10,850		25	1924	15-20	
Arc Royal*	22,200		31.0	1938	60	
Indomitable+	23,000		30.0	1941	70	
<u>Ships Proposed by Prime Minister</u>						
Repulse	32,727	6x15"	32.6	1916		1934-36
Prince of Wales	44,460	10x14"	29.25	1941		--

I Damaged on Convoy Escort, Mediterranean (Operation Halberd), 27/8/41

\* Sunk east of Gibraltar by U-81, 13/11/41

+ Damaged-run aground of Kingston, Jamaica, 3/11/41

British Warships of the Second World War, Op.Cit.  
British Battleships, Op.Cit.  
Brassey's Naval Annual, 1939-41.  
Jane's Fighting Ships, 1939-41.  
S. Roskill, The War at Sea, London, Vol. I, II, III.



TABLE XVII

JAPANESE NAVAL SHIPS, 7th DECEMBER, 1941

<u>Battleships</u>	<u>Displacement</u>	<u>Armament</u>	<u>Speed(Kts)</u>	<u>A/C</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Recons't/Modernized</u>
Yamato	63,720	9x18.1	27		16/12/41	
Nagato	38,980	8x16	25		1920	1935
Mutsu	38,980	8x16	25		1921	1936
Ise	35,400	12x14	25		1917	1936
Hyuga	35,400	12x14	25		1918	1936
Fuso	33,000	12x14	23		1915	1934
Yamashiro	33,000	12x14	23		1917	1934
Hiyael	32,250	12x14	30.5		1915	1936
Kirishima	32,250	12x14	30.5		1915	1936
Koneo	32,250	8x14	30.5		1913	1936
Haruna	32,250	8x14	30.5		1915	1934
<u>Carriers</u>						
Akabei	36,600	10x8	30	72	1927	
Kaea	36,000	10x8	30	72	1928	
Soryu	18,500	16x5	33	63	1937	
Hiryu	18,000	16x5	33	63	1940	
Shokaku	25,675	12x5.1	34	72	1941	
Zuikaku	25,675	12x5.1	34	72	1941	
Ryujo	8,500	8x5.1	31	31	1933	
Hosho	7,470	4x5.5	25	21	1922	
Zuino	13,000	8x5.1	26	31		



TABLE XVII con't

<u>Heavy Cruisers</u>	<u>Displacement</u>	<u>Armament</u>	<u>Speed (Kts)</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Refit</u>
Tone	11,213	8x8	35.5	1939-40	
Chikuma	11,213	8x8	35.5	1912	?
Ataero	13,400	10x8	33	1932	
Maya	13,400	10x8	33	1932	
Takao	13,400	10x8	33	1932	
Chokai	13,400	10x8	33	1932	
Haguro	13,000	10x8	33.5	1929	
Myoko	13,000	10x8	33.5	1928	
Nachi	13,000	10x8	33.5	1928	
Mogami	12,500	10x8	33	1935	
Mikuma	12,500	10x8	33	1935	
Suzuya	12,500	10x8	33	1936	
Kumano	12,500	10x8	33	1937	
Ashigara	13,000	10x8	33.5	1929	

Japanese Warships of W.W.II, London, 1969.  
Brassey's Naval Annual, 1939, London, 1940.  
Jane's Fighting Ships, 1939, 1940, 1941, London,  
1939, 1940, 1941  
A.J. Watts, and B.E. Gordon, The Imperial  
Japanese Navy, London, 1971.









